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Trapping in Tunisia

The Fox of the Desert has two favorite tricks in his bag—to shift quickly between offensive and defensive, and to do the unexpected. What the United Nations commanders in North Africa thought he would do we do not know, but most of the American public were taken by surprise, first when he lashed out at our troops in the west, and then when, eventually turned back by them, he sallied out from the Mareth Line against the British Eighth Army. We say both attacks were defeated; but we do not know exactly what their objectives were. Rommel is an expert at withdrawing as quickly as he advances, when the situation demands it. It will be remembered that, according to gossip, his defeat in Egypt was due only to the fact that General Montgomery discovered that he was about to retreat and caught him in the process with a heavy blow. It may be that now he is making a series of feints so that when he really tries to break through we shall not be ready.

The campaign in Tunisia will, we predict, furnish rich material for the theorists of strategy before it is over. It is all right to talk glibly of making it another Dunkirk, but we shall enjoy that sort of gloating better when the trap has been sprung—and General Rommel is in it.

How to Read the News from Russia

From the headlines in American newspapers, one would hardly suspect that the Red Army is still a thousand miles from Berlin. Its great victories in the winter campaign are being portrayed as even greater than they are in reality. There are two reasons for this; two opposite tendencies that work toward the same effect. The newspapers wholeheartedly devoted to winning the war—and they include most of the American press—are glad to encourage their readers by printing good news from the Russian front. But the newspapers whose owners fear communism more than they fear Hitler are also featuring the Russian victories—this time because they want to frighten their readers with visions of Stalin at the English Channel. They seem to be following the hint that Dr. Goebbels has been making in his shortwave broadcasts. To stop the terrible Reds—they argue by implication—why not make a separate peace?

The truth of the news from Russia seems to be that the winter offensive has now passed its climax. In the Donets Basin, the Russian drive has been halted, chiefly by difficulties of communication, and the Germans are counter-attacking in great force. The Russian offensive northwest of Moscow is meeting with real success, and both Rzhev and Gzhatsk were important if unpronounceable victories. In three or four weeks, however, this offensive will be halted by the spring thaws, during which that whole region becomes impassable. Whether the Russians can resume their advance next summer depends chiefly on what we do in Western Europe. So far they have been carrying almost the whole burden.

Manpower Muddles

No sooner had army representatives protested vehemently against the bill pending in Congress to exempt farm labor from the draft, than Chairman McNutt of the War Manpower Commission issued an order to draft boards to defer farm labor even if their quotas should remain unfilled. This may have been a victory for the farmers over the army and

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may represent a split between McNutt and the military. It may, however, be merely a graceful retreat before the inevitable; it is obviously better to defer by an executive order which may subsequently be modified if the occasion requires it, than to be bound by a law which cannot quickly be repealed. Certainly, in view of the serious food situation, something had to be done.

This incident underlines the story that a "super-Cabinet" has been deputized to consider carefully and decide the vexed issue of the size of the army. The correct principle on which a good decision must rest is obvious: regardless of the size of the army we should like to have or think we need, it must in fact be limited to the number we can transport to the active fronts and supply there, besides fulfilling lend-lease requirements. If a larger army than this is created, it cannot come into contact with the enemy until too late, if at all. It is the application of this principle that is difficult. If, as is reported, Bernard Baruch heads the "super-Cabinet," we should expect a sensible outcome.

Feed Europe Now

There are some men—and women—who can serve a good cause best by remaining silent about it. Herbert Hoover, Anne Morgan and Norman Thomas are all in this category when the cause is saving Europe from starvation. Mr. Hoover's known political ambitions, Miss Morgan's adoration of Marshal Pétain and her corresponding hostility to the Free French, and Mr. Thomas' former die-hard isolationism all make them suspect as supporters of any plan for sending food to Europe now.

Yet the program they advocated at a recent meeting in New York's Carnegie Hall is undoubtedly a worthy one, and may be a sound one. Briefly, it is this: Since whole populations are threatened with extinction unless we act, and since we are already feeding Greece without benefiting the Germans, let us now extend that plan and send food from South America in neutral ships, to be distributed by neutral agents like the Swiss and the Swedes to the hungering peoples under Nazi rule.

Because they are free of the disabilities of Miss Morgan and the Messrs. Hoover and Thomas, it is a pleasure to record that a somewhat similar proposal has just been made by forty-three American Protestant leaders, all of whom opposed the Hoover plan when it was first put forward two years and more ago.

"Today," they say, "the situation is radically different. Privation is rapidly deepening into starvation. The fact is that unless such necessities as powdered milk and vitamins are made available, a very considerable proportion of the population of Belgium, and possibly other subjugated nations, may perish before the war's end."

Since it comes from men whose motives are above suspicion, we hope this solemn warning will receive the very serious attention it deserves.

What Rickenbacker Means to Say

Let us pause to reflect on two statements that Captain Rickenbacker made in a single public interview. First statement: "In times like these I do not approve of overtime pay except for the men in the foxholes, the swamps, the desert—those making the supreme sacrifice." Second statement: "I am opposed to limiting salaries to $25,000 a year, because to limit salary, you limit incentive." These are not contradictory statements, if you grasp the captain's real meaning. He is saying in effect that American civilians are divided into two great classes: those who work at machines and those who work at big glass-covered desks with two secretaries and a dictaphone. The first class should not be paid for working overtime; it needs no incentive but pure patriotism. The second class is so mercenary and so indifferent to the life or death of the country that its members will go on strike if they are paid less than $25,000 a year, free of income tax.

Perhaps the truth is that Captain Rickenbacker tends to idealize the American workingman and presents too bleak a picture of the big executives. He ought to be told that there are good and bad men in both these classes, and that now is the time for all classes to be given equal treatment. In one of his early speeches, he suggested that idle workmen might be shipped to the South Pacific and that their place at the lathes might be taken by soldiers in uniform. That would be a good idea if only he carried it to its logical conclusion. What about sending idle or dishonest executives to the foxholes of New Guinea, and what about assigning Marines from Guadalcanal to sit at their big glass-topped desks?

Why French Sailors Are Deserting

The true story of the desertions from the Richelieu and other French warships in American ports is slowly being revealed. There seems to be no question of de Gaullist propaganda, since the Free French want to avoid trouble and are reluctant to accept recruits from Giraud's navy. There is no ground whatever for the charge of American complicity that was made by an angry officer of the Richelieu. The reason that scores of men are leaving the battleship is simply that they want to fight the Germans and don't trust their present officers to lead them into battle.

For more than two years they were subjected to German propaganda, some of it diluted with Vichy water and some of it coming direct from Berlin, where several of the higher French naval officers had been flattered and won over to a "realistic" view of the European conflict. For more than two years, the sailors were told that the British and the Americans were their real enemies. Some of them to whom we have talked were at Casablanca during the three days' battle that cost so many French and American lives. The offi-

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cers who ordered them to resist the American landings are still commanding French ships today, and the men refuse to believe that they have suddenly been won over to the United Nations. So, at this first opportunity, they are taking service with de Gaulle, knowing exactly where he stands.

We regret their decision because, like everybody else, we want to see the best of the French battleships get back into service at the earliest possible moment, and with a full crew. But we regret still more the original decision of the State Department to deal with the pro-fascist governors of North Africa instead of with the democratic representatives of the French nation. That is the root of the trouble on board the Richelieu.

Two Good Appointments

Last week in Washington there were two appointments heartening to those eager for all-out war production. Donald Nelson, sustaining the fighting spirit of his recent actions, named J. A. Krug, former TVA executive and recently WPB Power Division director, to be vice-chairman in charge of Materials Distribution and chairman of the strategic Requirements Committee. This action provided the proper supplement to the recent new grant of power to Charles Wilson, former General Electric president, for Krug has long been a partisan for civilian control of war production.

Good choice number two is the naming of Wayne Darrow to the post of Agricultural Labor Administrator in the Department of Agriculture, on equal status with the Production Administrator and the Distribution Administrator in the department hierarchy. Darrow furnishes the means for going ahead in the right direction at a rapid clip, if Congress will put up the necessary funds for a farm-labor-mobilization program. The department has requested $65,000,000 to be used to mobilize a three-million-man land army for the transfer of hopelessly submarginal farms to larger farms, now going forward slowly under the Farm Security Administration, and for the pooling of labor in strategic areas. The request is now before the Budget Bureau. It will have to clear there, and be passed quickly by Congress if Darrow is to be successful in his stupendous task. Wickard and Darrow now have the program and the will to crack the problem of mobilizing farm labor, if Congress will approve the modest requests which Secretary Wickard thus far has made of it. The next move is up to Congress.

The Three Freedoms

On the grounds that it has violated the Espionage Act, the Post Office has revoked the second-class-mailing privileges of The Militant, weekly newspaper of the American followers of Leon Trotsky.

According to Attorney General Biddle, The Militant "is permeated with the thesis that the war is being fought for the benefit of the ruling groups and will serve merely to continue the enslavement of the working classes. It is urged that this war is only an imperialistic clash for spoils at the expense of the lives and living standards of the people. The lines in this publication also include derision of democracy and the 'Four Freedoms' as hypocritical shams, anti-British attacks, *charges of Fascist collaboration by the United States, stimulation of race issues, and other material deemed visionary* in character and appearing to be calculated to engender opposition to the war effort as well as to interfere with the morale of the armed forces." (Italics ours.)

It was on the basis of Mr. Biddle's letter that the Post Office acted. We hope our readers will ponder his statement carefully before concluding that the Post Office was justified. To us this virtual suppression of a newspaper which, with all its faults (and they were many and grave), could never be accused of the slightest sympathy for Hitlerism, contains disturbing implications for the future of free speech in this war. If newspapers can be barred from the mails because, among other things, they accuse the United States of collaborating with fascists, "stimulate" race issues and print material which government officials consider "visionary," then surely we may as well abandon all pretense of enjoying at least one of the Four Freedoms as long as the war lasts.

Our Matteotti Case

Carlo Tresca was murdered on January 11. There was no real doubt from the beginning that this was a political crime, and at first the Communists were accused of having plotted it. The police made a great show of activity. Soon they arrested a gangster whose automobile had been parked near the scene of the murder. But if he really did the shooting, he must have had accomplices and somebody must have paid

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them. The police couldn't make him talk, and they weren't talking themselves, and soon the Tresca case had almost disappeared from the newspapers, for want of new developments.

Meanwhile, at a meeting held in Tresca's honor, one speaker had told a complete story of the crime. He named the man he said was guilty—a powerful figure in the Italian colony who used to be on very good terms with Mussolini's government. He described this man's quarrel with Tresca and explained why the District Attorney's office had made no progress in solving the murder. We have no means of knowing whether the speaker was telling an accurate story. What we do know is that the police ought to bring it into the open and either exonerate the man accused or else arrest him. The person in the District Attorney's office blamed for hampering the investigation should be removed from any connection with it, simply as a matter of precaution. This is becoming our own Matteotti case. It is intolerable to think that a widely respected anti-fascist can be shot down on the streets of New York and that—apparently for political reasons—nothing is being done about it.

You had better look into this, Mayor LaGuardia.

The Republicans Look to 1944

SOME FIFTEEN MONTHS before the national presidential conventions, there are already stirrings behind the lines of the opposing parties. The preliminary fight is, of course, always fiercest in the party out of power. The Republicans, with the stakes of presidential power more enticingly near and real than they have been for twelve years, are now starting to scan their candidate material and their best probable tactic.

They know that in all probability they will have to come up once more against the one man they have been unable to beat, President Roosevelt himself. They know that each time in the middle of his term there has seemed to be a reaction against him, which, however, was later dissipated when the time actually came for the people to make their choice. They hope that this time the congressional rebellion, the Democratic intra-party split, the farmers' unrest, the press campaign—a pattern familiar enough on the eve of past elections—will turn out to be the real McCoy. They hunger for power and the fleshpots of patronage.

But who is to be the leader under whose banner they can emerge from the shadows of the dark and lean years? The candidates seem, for the present, to be falling roughly into three groups.

One may best be called the "normalcy" group. They are the stand-patters of the party who have never learned anything and never forgotten anything in terms of basic social outlook. They believe in what they like to call, with a shrewd semantic instinct, the "American system" of "free enterprise"—which means freedom from any but the most rudimentary government controls, and freedom therefore for powerful corporations to exploit workers, consumers and small competitors. They believe in governmental "economy" and "balanced budgets." They have neither experience nor interest in the broad sweep of foreign affairs, and hope against hope that America can go back to its pre-war "normal" state. They are therefore what may be called "neo-isolationists."

There are many potential candidates who fall into this group, including at least a half-dozen panting Republican Governors. But two men stand out from among them, and are not likely to be headed off by the rest. One is Governor Bricker of Ohio and the other is Governor Dewey of New York. If Dewey is being wholly candid, he is not in the 1944 race, having made at least two statements—in which it is difficult to find any lurking ambiguity—withdrawing himself. Possibly he figures that he needs the four extra years as Governor in order to build a record of actual achievement, and wipe out the stigma of youth and inexperience in big affairs that has thus far attached to him. Possibly also he is not without a suspicion that President Roosevelt has one final term coming to him, and that Republican chances will be brighter in 1948 than in 1944.

Governor Bricker has the advantage of coming from Ohio, which is a traditional pasture ground for Republican candidates and Presidents—perhaps because it is at once strongly industrial and strongly rural. He has tried to build up an image of himself as a middle-of-the-roader, but the truth is that he belongs to the reactionary wing of the party. He is known as a budget-balancer and a "safe" man. He has carefully kept from making too many enemies and from embroiling himself too soon in the tumultuous issues of the day. He is considered a much safer man than Dewey by the professional party boys, some of whom regard Dewey as unpredictable and tending toward progressivism. As far as the party machine is concerned, Bricker is probably far out in front as a candidate. He has been described as a more honest Warren Harding, and his chances for nomination and election will depend upon whether or not the country's mood swings back again—as it did after World War I—to a Harding type of "normalcy."

The second group of candidates are the Republican liberals. Their leader is the now titular head of the party, Wendell Willkie. A close runner-up is Governor Stassen of Minnesota, who was the keynoter of the 1940 Republican convention. Stassen is somewhat in Dewey's shoes. He professes to have no presidential aspirations for 1944, although he has not publicly committed himself to that effect, and would probably not be averse to having the lightning strike him. He is the youngest of the crop, he is able and he is politically astute. His record as Governor is pretty good, even in

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his handling of the difficult problem of labor relations. He has made some speeches on the post-war world which put him squarely on record as an internationalist rather than an isolationist. He is due to go into the navy shortly, which is a credit to him personally and will also do him no harm politically.

The case of Wendell Willkie is still as complex, and his future as puzzling, as they have been for the past two years. It is clear that the professional party leaders do not like him. He stuck his neck out by his early support of the President's foreign policy, and even more by his round-the-world swing and his statements on a second front and on a United Nations command. He has seemed to flout all the rules of political smartness. Which means, of course, that he is counting on a last-minute rank-and-file groundswell to carry him into the nomination over the heads of the party machine. Yet he has recently not been averse to courting the machine, as witness his speech before the Indiana legislature, which could scarcely have been rejected on the face of it by even the stanchest stand-patter.

The third and least calculable group are the "heroes." Every war produces a crop of them and every presidential campaign during or immediately after a war must reckon with them. Thus far three such Republican names have emerged, two of them professing not to have presidential aspirations. One, of course, is Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who is, in publicity terms, the biggest American name of the war thus far. A second is Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, whose ordeal on a raft paved the way for his anti-labor fulminations. The chances are strongly against either of them getting beyond the stage where their names are buzzed about. The strongest candidate of the three is Gen. Hanford McNider, former head of the American Legion, wounded in action and decorated for gallantry in Australia. For a presidential candidate, that is a record hard to beat.

In terms of social thinking, all three of the "heroes" undoubtedly belong in the reactionary wing of the party, even farther to the right than Bricker and Dewey. They would receive the unstinted support of the pre-Pearl Harbor isolationists, the America Firsters, the Christian Fronters and the lunatic fringe of the party.

It is anyone's guess as to which of the three groups —the normalcy group, the liberals, or the "heroes" of the reactionary wing—will get out in front in the Republican race during the next twelve months. Everything depends, of course, on how the war goes and what the Democrats do.

But within the Republican Party there are more than candidates struggling with each other. There are certain rather clearly defined forces of which the candidates are the personalized expression.

There are, first, the machine professionals of the party—narrow and earthbound in vision, possessing a great tenacity yet capable of yielding ultimately to someone they do not wholly trust, provided that he alone can get the votes. There are, second, the big contributors of party funds and the controllers of press and radio—the big-industry groups and the representatives of the National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce. Their desire is chiefly for a "safe" man, who can be controlled, and about whom there is no foolishness. Third, there is the group of new Radical Conservatives, whose Brain Trust are the Time-Life-Fortune editors clustering around Henry Luce, and whose spokesman in Congress is now Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce. They want someone who is both safe enough to be managed and yet streamlined enough to catch the popular imagination. And finally, there are the rank and file of local Republican voters and party workers.

Where the first two of these four groups stand is pretty clear. But the last two are still in flux. And the chances are strong that they may, as events unfold, be able to swing the balance.

Absenteeism

WE ARE TOLD that one of the biggest problems in keeping up production is an increased tendency of wage-earners to stay away from the job; numerous statistical studies are presented to indicate what a loss in manpower this represents. From this observation the minds of our Rickenbackers, our Admiral Lands and our labor-haters in Congress jump to comparison with the hardships of the men at the front, and to recommendations that men who will not work be forced to fight.

Aside from any question as to the possible usefulness in fighting of men who prefer to soldier on the job, there seems to be a wide gap in this reasoning process. It is assumed, without any investigation or proof whatever, that men and women who do not come to work stay away from pure laziness, or because they do not understand the importance of top speed in output, or because they are getting high wages and want to blow them in on drink or extravagant living. This argues a curious lack of scientific concern for cause and effect in dealing with complex human beings, a lack that would be universally regarded as insane if employed in dealing with even the simplest machine. What should we think of anyone who urged that machines which broke down be offered the choice between starting up again and being shipped to an arsenal or navy yard?

Surely there may be other causes for absenteeism than pure cussedness. Indeed, we can think of a number which we should expect to assume far greater importance. Many defense workers, for instance, face great difficulties in transportation, because they have to

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go long distances to work, cars are scarce, gasoline and tires strictly rationed and buses are overcrowded. What happens when a car breaks down and the undermanned garage cannot repair it for a week? What happens when there are two flats on the worn tires of a car with one spare? Or what happens when a man who works ten or eleven hours a day, six days a week, and spends two or three more hours a day going to and from the plant, has to cut wood because the oil or kerosene ration has given out, or has to do some other chore to keep the home running and the children warm and fed? What happens when there is a blizzard or ice storm?

Many defense workers have moved to overcrowded cities, or to the neighborhood of plants in small towns where the housing is insufficient. The nation has failed to provide adequate living quarters for them, to furnish modern sanitary facilities, medical care or access to hospitals. Men live two or three to a room, sometimes tumbling into a "hot bed" just vacated by another who has a different shift. Food shortages occur; meals are hurried and ill prepared. It is a mercy that we have not had a serious epidemic; we *have* had waves of contagious colds in the most severe winter in years. How many stay away because of sickness or a generally debilitated condition?

Hundreds of thousands of women have taken defense jobs. Help, either from the family or hired, is unavailable to housewives and mothers of small children. Day nurseries and nursery schools—which for years have been an integral part of every factory and collective farm in Russia—are seldom provided. Congress has just turned down a moderate appropriation for this purpose requested by the Department of Labor. Yet families have to be taken care of. How much absenteeism is traceable to this cause?

Even in cases where men go on a spree, and bad morale prevails, may there not be understandable and removable causes? What about long hours and hard work, coupled with lack of recreation facilities, poor living conditions and the breaking up of family life? What about the discouraging effect of interruption of production due to shortages of materials and bad planning? What about the failure of Congress to close loopholes in taxation of big profits or to limit big incomes? What about bad management, which fails to make the worker feel that he has a stake in the enterprise? In certain instances labor-management coöperative committees have reduced absenteeism drastically.

What is called for is not making the industrial life of America a prison camp, but an objective investigation of the causes of absenteeism, and of the causes of lack of absenteeism, where better conditions prevail. Years ago a committee of prominent engineers investigated the causes of waste in American industry, when the country was inflamed with anti-labor propaganda against union working rules. It came out with the conclusion that in every industry studied the major fault lay with management. We should not be surprised if a competent study of absenteeism now should arrive at the same conclusion—including in management government war planning and the obvious incompetence of Congress, which has a far higher percentage of absenteeism than any industrial plant.

It may be a relief for the inner bitterness of certain much publicized persons to denounce labor, but one might as well denounce the human race, as far as any remedial action is concerned. We have to produce with the men and women available. If they are doing something we don't like, let us use a little elementary common sense by finding out what leads them to do it.

The Erlich-Alter Executions

THE NEWS of the execution by the Soviet Union of the Polish Jewish labor leaders, Henrich Erlich and Victor Alter, brings into sharp focus one of the great paradoxes of this war. We say that we are fighting a war for four freedoms: freedom of speech and religion, freedom from fear and want. Yet one of our most powerful allies in this war, and the ally which has certainly inflicted the greatest punishment on one of our enemies, is a nation which frankly denies freedom of speech and freedom from fear, and pays only grudging service to freedom of religion. That ally is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The only freedom it fully respects and seeks to guarantee its people is freedom from want.

American liberals have too long closed their eyes to these facts and the implications of them. It is time that we learned to know our ally, to recognize the consequences of his bad qualities as well as those of his good, and not allow our admiration for his fighting abilities to blind us to the problems his participation in the war creates. The announcement of the deaths of Erlich and Alter should take the scales from our eyes.

If Henrich Erlich and Victor Alter had been born Frenchmen, their names might have been Léon Blum and Léon Jouhaux. It is only because they were Poles that they were not so well known in Western Europe and America. Henrich Erlich was once a subject of the Tsar, but a very unruly subject. A Socialist from his student days, he rose to be a leader of the Russian Menshevik Party, an official of the Jewish Bund, or labor organization, and a member of the first St. Petersburg Soviet. More than that, he was elected a delegate to the Socialist International. After the October revolution and the triumph of the Bolsheviks, he left Russia for Poland. There he quickly became the revered head of the Polish Jewish workers' movement.

If Henrich Erlich was a student, an intellectual, the offshoot of a bourgeois family, Victor Alter was a pro-

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letarian through and through. An electrician by profession, he wandered from country to country, associating with other exiles and acquiring from them his Socialist training. When the Tsar's government was overthrown he returned to Russia. But the honeymoon of Russian democracy was soon over: in 1918 Alter was arrested by the Bolsheviks. Escaping to Poland, he became in time secretary general of the Polish Jewish Workers' Union, and often substituted for Erlich at the meetings of the Socialist International. He was a tireless writer on labor and socialism, and a man of unflagging energy and devotion to the cause to which he dedicated his life.

Both Henrich Erlich and Victor Alter were consistently and vigorously anti-fascist and more particularly anti-Nazi. Both warned the Polish government again and again of the dangers of underestimating Hitler or attempting to come to terms with him, and both advocated coöperation with the Communists in a united front against Nazism and urged a rapprochement with the Soviet Union to resist German pressure.

When Germany attacked Poland, Erlich and Alter rallied the Polish working class to the defense of their country, and just before the collapse of organized Polish resistance they called on the Polish labor movement to continue the struggle against Hitler underground. Then they fled before the invading Nazi hordes, and were arrested by the advancing Russians.

They remained in prison until some time after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, when, at the urgent request of the Polish government in exile, they were released. Immediately they began to organize the Poles in Russia into new armies to take up again the war against Germany. But they were soon rearrested.

When the news of their second arrest reached the United States, many American liberals and labor leaders, including William Green of the AFL and Philip Murray of the CIO, protested against it. During his trip to Moscow last year, Wendell Willkie made representations in behalf of Erlich and Alter at the Kremlin.

Now it is announced that even while the protests were being received, the men were already dead. According to a letter which Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Ambassador in Washington, has written to President Green of the AFL, they were executed in December, 1941, for "subversive activity and espionage." For fifteen months, not a word of their fate escaped the tight lips of their executioners.

It is perhaps useless to argue now the question of the probable guilt or innocence of Erlich and Alter. Those who could believe Léon Blum and Léon Jouhaux guilty of similar charges will feel that Erlich and Alter were guilty as charged. Those who would brand any such accusation a monstrous falsehood if made of Blum or Jouhaux must also reject the possibility that Erlich and Alter can have been guilty. Those who always want to see documents will prefer to reserve judgment—in this case perhaps forever.

What is undeniable is that Erlich and Alter were Poles and Socialists. In other words, they were old political opponents of the Bolsheviks; and, in any contest over the eventual Russo-Polish border, they might—though this is by no means certain—have favored the Polish claims. No one who knew them, or knew their records, will admit that they could have been guilty of more.

For liberals the conclusion is clear. In United States Army circles there is talk of the "next" war against Russia. There are some who believe that the preparations now being made to train an army of more than nine million men are designed with a view not only of defeating Germany and Japan but also of crushing Russia. Knowing this, American liberals have been so fearful of furthering the drift in that direction that they have seldom faced the hard facts squarely.

The hard facts are these. The old fratricidal war between Socialists and Communists continues. So does the old struggle between Russia and Poland for territory. The war against the common enemy served to push these lesser conflicts into the background, but it has not suspended them. When the war against the common enemy is over, they will certainly come to the fore again.

When they do, liberals must know where they stand. They must not conclude that because the Soviet Union professes to be a socialist state, its claims are to be favored because of this against the claims of any other government. Neither must they even unwittingly strengthen any tendency toward armed intervention in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. They must neither praise the Soviet Union uncritically or scream against it. And in forming their opinion of the merits and demerits of the Soviet regime, they must take deep cognizance of facts like the execution of Henrich Erlich and Victor Alter.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Journal of Opinion

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Australia: Bridgehead in the Pacific

A YEAR AGO, Australia was not in the mood to develop attitudes toward the settlement of post-war problems. Japan was still capturing, with apparently inevitable precision, one zone after another of Australia's outlying defenses. Australians were determined and eager to fight, but we had sent the great majority of our trained men to every part of the fighting world, and we wondered what Australian supplies were in existence with which to arm the civilian population.

The cities were blacked out; many women and children left the coastal areas; holidays for all employers were canceled over the Christmas vacation. People's armies were voluntarily organized and, during their lunch-break, workers practised defending their factories. Cattle were driven inland; shopkeepers were ordered by the government to build up extra stocks of foodstuffs, and the military authorities worked out alternative strategical plans, one of which included the possibility of evacuating northern Australia. All small coastal boats were seized by the authorities, and volunteers were enrolled as wardens, airplane-spotters, coastal guards. Although it would be wrong to say that we were not worried about the extent of our military deficiencies, in Australia there was no panic, no defeatism, no suggestion that we would not defend our country—even if we temporarily lost our shores.

Inspired by the Russian achievements of a people-in-arms, optimistic in the thought that there were still centers of resistance between us and the Japs, and characteristically confident in the ability of our Australian democracy to escape from any difficulty, we speeded up production, introduced rationing, intensified civilian defenses, brought more men into the armed forces and got ready to welcome General MacArthur.

As I look back on those days, my feeling is that we believed it to be inevitable that America should send aid to Australia. It seems that we were aroused and sustained to double and redouble our own activities by the confidence that we were a necessary outpost to American Pacific defenses and a valuable aid to the defense of United States democracy. Because, therefore, we unconsciously expected MacArthur, because we very much needed American aid, only a few reactionary newspapers and nineteenth-century empire builders disapproved of the important views expressed by Prime Minister Curtin on December 27, 1941. Introducing his thoughts characteristically, he quoted from a major Australian poet, Bernard O'Dowd:

> That reddish veil which o'er the face
> Of night-hag East is drawn
> Flames new disaster for the race?
> Or can it be the dawn?

I see 1942 [the Prime Minister continued] as a year in which we shall know the answer. I would, however, that we provide the answer. We can and we will. Therefore, I see 1942 as a year of immense change in Australian life.

The Australian government's policy has been grounded on two facts. One is that war with Japan is not a phase of the struggle with the Axis powers, but is a new war. The second is that Australia must go on to a war footing. Those two facts involve two lines of action—one in the direction of external policy as to our dealings with Britain, the United States, Russia, the Netherlands East Indies and China in the higher direction of war in the Pacific; the second is the reshaping, in fact, the revolutionizing, of the Australian way of life until a war footing is attained, quickly, efficiently and without question. . . .

The Australian government, therefore, regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the democracies' fighting plan. Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom. We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces. We know the constant threat of invasion. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength. But we know, too, that Australia can go and Britain can still hold on. We are, therefore, determined that Australia shall not go and shall exert all our energies toward the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy. Summed up, Australian external policy will be shaped toward obtaining Russian aid and working out, with the United States as the major factor, a plan of Pacific strategy along with the British, Chinese and Dutch forces.

The peace planning, which is gradually entering into our national thinking, will find its guiding principles in that speech. It was a revolutionary way of expressing the ideas that were uppermost in the minds of most Australians at the time it was delivered. It translated into official pronouncements the belief of the man-in-the-street that Australia would use her influence in peace and in war for the purpose of unifying the actions and harmonizing the policies of Great Britain and the United States.

To be sure, there are internal stresses and strains. The traditional trade-union policy has been to demand improving social services from a labor government; the regular source of difficulty to the labor movement when a labor government is in office is the rise of differences between what the government thinks to be possible and the reform and improvements that the unions believe to be necessary and practicable. The demands of a total war effort therefore do not fit easily into the experiences of labor in peacetime. There have been disagreements

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between the government and the party members outside—but so far, these have been settled within the party constitution. There have been irritations and criticism of the government—but the strongly held belief that the war must be won, together with the controls introduced by the government against private banking and vested interests, have held the loyalty of party members to the Prime Minister—so far. If, however, the rank and file of the party or the people come to think that the government is retaining rationing, restrictions on domestic spending, and civilian controls, longer than these are necessary for winning the war, then disagreements and difficulties will follow. At the moment, however, I believe that Mr. Curtin is holding the unity and loyalty both of his own movement and of the public generally to the policy that he is following —and even to the greater restrictions that he is demanding.

Judging the matter selfishly, we can't afford to choose between Britain and the United States. We do not want to be faced with such a choice. If our traditions are English, our geography is Pacific. If the fall of British Singapore opened the way for an invasion of Australia, the American counter-attack in the Solomons gave us the first ray of hope that we dare think of peace machinery—and, maybe, we found the hope and the symbol of Allied unity in the combined victory at Port Moresby. Moreover, without in any way minimizing the debt of gratitude that we owe to America, we are rightly proud of the military and economic achievements of Australia itself.

In judging the future actions of Australians, Americans must not forget that if our democratic independence from British control was won peacefully and easily, with agitation and not by war, it was nevertheless won completely. There is no feeling among Australians that we are restrained in our actions by Britain—and we have no confidence whatever that the problems of the world can be assisted by the collapse of the United Kingdom. We are not fighting for British imperialism; we decided freely and enthusiastically to enter the war because we believed that fascism was a menace to the democratic and working-class principles which had flowered well in Australia. We have our own nationality, our own literature, our own traditions —British in origin, Australian in development. Our official national song is "Advance Australia Fair"; our unofficial anthem is "Waltzing Matilda," typically Australian in language and spirit. But we know also "God Save the King" and "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Our attitude in peace and in war is to assist the development of a world order, based on the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

We want the United Kingdom to settle the Indian question because our people hate every trace of imperialism; we want more assistance given to China because, over the years, the labor movement, which boycotted Japanese goods, went on strike against sending pig iron to Japan and raised financial assistance for the Chinese, has won the Australian people to admiration of China and to recognition of the part that she also must play in the Pacific, both today and tomorrow.

Australia is thus a bridgehead in the Pacific; a necessary air base, if you like, in the global communication of ideas and the interdependence of national safety. As one of the smaller countries, whose own future is directly involved, we can see clearly that the future of all depends on the development of world organization and world settlement of our problems. If isolation or imperialism prevails in America, then we smaller nations are faced with the possibilities of great disaster, but we know also that democratic civilization itself is doomed. Our influence at the peace conferences will be exerted, therefore, toward policies of collective security, world organization, self-determination and economic freedom, full employment and rising standards of living.

Americans need not be afraid that in any world organization we will automatically accept the views of Great Britain on foreign affairs; the British need not worry that we have sold ourselves to America in return for her aid. We are not going to sell ourselves to anyone—not even to ourselves, but we will eagerly play our part in a world partnership. To that partnership Australia will take her view of economic problems, her advanced labor movement as well as her present migration laws, her achievements as well as her prejudices, her jingoism as well as her international views, her conservatives and reactionaries as well as her progressives and her trade-unionists.

Within the generally held idea of a world organization, the particular views of Australia at the peace conference will depend partly on the extent of our preliminary thinking, and partly on the political set-up in the country at the time. Though there is in Australia little trace of geographical judgment on world problems, as seems revealed in the United States, there are deep political differences which influence our attitude toward Indian self-government, colonialism, collective security, or self-determination of small nations. The labor movement through the Labor Party and the trade unions exerts not merely a progressive view on all these questions, but also the long-range dominant view. Many Australians will disagree with such statements—but I make them after watching over the last ten years the manner in which the militant labor view on the issues of war and fascism have been accepted by the Australian people. If, therefore, the progressives, the world planners, the Wallaces and the American liberals can expect support from all Australians in the attempt to prevent war by the combined action, unified thinking and organization of all the United Nations, it is also true that this support will be more determined, more

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conscious and more forceful, if the Australian people at the peace conference are represented by the members of a labor government. Already labor is beginning to make up for the absence of post-war thinking in our year of strains and fears. The federal government has appointed a Minister for Social Reconstruction; a peace-making department is being established; the federal Constitution is being amended to give the federal Parliament all the powers necessary for post-war building.

The divisions in this world, whether they be examined in Australia or in the United States, are not horizontal but vertical. The hopes of a lasting and prosperous peace depends on the unity and understanding among those in all the Allied countries who believe in the need to build a new world on the principles of freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom to grow and freedom to enjoy the best in all nations.

LLOYD ROSS

Count on the Corn Belt!

IT IS NO LONGER a question of what is going to happen to food production in 1943. It is already happening. Spring pigs are arriving in the corn belt. The pork chops you will hear rumors about next August, and won't be able to find, are already being born. The food battle of 1943 has begun.

Last year just about every good producing acre in the country was in cultivation. There is little new land to be brought under the plow for 1943. Last year employment on the farms was surprisingly high, but the departure of a million men this year will hurt. Last year the weather was the best in memory and ideal weather has a way of not repeating itself. Machinery this year is a year older and replacements are restricted. Little wonder that serious doubts exist about food for 1943, with many predictions of sharply reduced yield.

The possibility has not escaped the politicians or the lobbyists. The threatening food shortage is being used as a club on both sides of every farm debate in Washington. If oratory could do it, weeds would already be four feet high in every corn field. Pigs would be dying of starvation and just outside the feed lot the farmer would be lying, his arms full of last year's corn, a victim of exhaustion.

The farmer has joined in the general alarm, though he is not so upset as one might think. This is the season to sit around grain elevators and talk. For farmer-novelists like Louis Bromfield it is the season to write The New York Times. All will feel better when the growing season starts.

This is not to deny the signs of a rising discontent with the farmer's lot in an industrial society. Ed O'Neal, with the knowledge of farm psychology which keeps him president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, told a farm readership recently that industrial societies are inclined to look on farmers as peasants; to keep them in servitude to assure cheap food. This may sound odd coming from Ol' Marse Ed of the Alabama plantation peasantry, but it's the sort of thing that is coming to a slow boil in many a farmer's mind. The cause is high industrial wages.

Examining their changing status in an industrial nation at war, many farmers find themselves opposing parity subsidies or incentive payments as a matter of economic morality. There is a sincere and naïve desire to declare their independence before the world. Subsidies offer the first issue since Pearl Harbor on which the Farm Bureau and the Grange have any widespread, spontaneous support from the farmers themselves. But when the farm bloc persists in trying to revise parity to include all labor costs, it still is misinterpreting or deliberately distorting the farmer's real wishes. Aside from avoiding parity payments the farmer is not particularly interested in price increases. This may be hard for city dwellers to believe, but Dr. George Gallup and the Fortune poll have verified it within recent weeks. The farmer doesn't want higher prices. He wants manpower.

The farmer's manpower troubles center around industrial wages in a few concentrated areas. But over the corn belt as a whole it is the draft that has touched him closest. In Logan County, Illinois, neighbors last month husked 300 bushels of corn for Walter Sass, a young farmer who was inducted into the army with his crop still in the field. A stockman was taken recently by his draft board despite a long petition citing his skill as a farmer. The son of one farmer was deferred and ordered to find farm employment while the son of another farmer across the road was inducted. Many draft boards still seem reluctant to act on their power to defer farm producers.

A manpower policy which creates problems such as that on the Miller farm doesn't make sense to farmers. Two Miller sons were drafted, leaving a family enterprise which kept 1,000 central Illinois acres at the highest possible productivity. It will be necessary to hire laborers this year. If any can be found, they are likely to be farmers of fighting age from southern Illinois, deferred by their own draft boards and confronted with the necessity of learning mechanized farming before approaching the drafted Miller boys in skill and productivity.

However, sitting and talking in grain elevators, a farmer likes to feel that nothing is being done to ease his manpower problem, and he usually exaggerates the picture. Actually, a good deal is being done. Some farm-

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ers are being deferred—364,000 already and more than 3,000,000 by the end of the year, according to the army. Despite the false start in the Arizona cotton fields, the army will act on the President's orders to supply men for the harvest of perishable crops. High-school boys will form a pool of summer labor. Nine thousand of them will be trained in Illinois alone. The answer to the greatest need of all in the corn belt—year-round help—is being partially met by the Farm Security Administration's program of transporting farm workers from areas where a labor pool can be formed to regions where crops are ready for harvest and a critical labor shortage exists. This program would be more widely appreciated among farmers except for a campaign of distortion being conducted by the farm bloc.

Rep. Everett Dirksen of Illinois sounded the farm-lobby line in Congress recently, gibing at the FSA labor program as "social reform." He ridiculed health and comfort standards "imposed" on farmers accepting FSA-sponsored labor. The very week in which he spoke, twenty-three Illinois farmers were hiring men through the FSA without any thought of social reform. They were simply getting labor where labor could be found. It could be found at Illinois State Normal University, less than forty miles from Dirksen's home town. The word spread and now thirty men from southern Illinois are being trained each week at the university, with hiring orders piling up. A similar group is being trained and hired each week at the University of Illinois.

Kentuckians are clearing through two Ohio training centers at a rate of eighty or more a week. Men from the hills of southern Indiana are being trained at Purdue. In Wisconsin a hundred families moved from the cut-over lands of the north to the productive dairies of the southern part of the state. These are some of the corn-belt activities of a program which in a few weeks has spread to forty-seven training centers in thirty states. By February 20, 950 year-round workers had been trained and placed on high-production farms. The rate of training now is 1,400 men a week. It is only a beginning. Much more can be done if money is forthcoming from Congress.

Corn-belt farmers hire the men quite simply at prevailing wages. When families move, the FSA looks into housing as a matter of routine. This is not "reform" so much as it is an effort to use labor efficiently. Laborers work better and produce more on the better farms where housing conditions are good—but most of the corn belt already meets these requirements. Without checking his own district, Representative Dirksen apparently expressed the Farm Bureau's fears for the plantation owners, who generally provide poor housing. Producing short-staple cotton, when the greatest need is for long fibers, the plantation owners are hard pressed to maintain a place in the war effort. The over-supply of cheap labor always available to them is also available for more productive work elsewhere. They have no desire to have their field hands get a taste of better wages and better living conditions on Northern farms. There were even threats to arrest agents of the United States Employment Service when recruiting began for work in the long-staple-cotton fields of Arizona.

The FSA will not solve the manpower problem. Neither will the army nor high-school volunteers. It cannot be solved in a nation at war. There simply is not enough manpower to go around. Corn-belt farmers know this. But many feel that so long as manpower was bound to be scarce, machine power should have been increased.

The farmer paid fantastic auction prices for used equipment before price ceilings were invoked. A four-year-old corn-picker that cost $770 new might go for $1,100. Price ceilings are being avoided with the farmer's traditional casualness toward a law he does not like. If the ceiling price is $600, the machine will go for that at private sale with $500 thrown in for a sack of nuts and bolts.

In Nebraska and the Dakotas, where a great part of last year's corn crop was grown, there is no reserve of old machinery. Successive crop failures running back as far as eight years delayed mechanization. Even in the highly mechanized areas new machinery allotments are inadequate. In Woodford County, Illinois, sixty-four farmers have applied for corn-pickers. The county will be allowed twenty-four. Combine harvesters have been requested by fifty-three farmers, with twenty-three to be rationed out. Applications for 135 spike-toothed harrow sections have been filed. The quota is thirty-four.

Even when permits are obtained, deliveries are not dependable. A farmer who has harvested soybeans for his neighbors for eight years has a permit for a new combine. But he has notified his neighbors not to count on him because he doesn't think the new combine will be delivered. Given machinery, soybeans would be an attractive crop this year because it requires only a third of the manpower needed for corn. Here is a case where a little steel invested in new machinery would have brought big food dividends. As it is, soybean planting prospects are mixed.

It is the planting prospect, from soybeans to garden patches, that is, after all, the key to the whole 1943 fight for food. Congressmen do not grow food. Neither do farm lobbies. Nor the FSA. Farmers grow food.

Just about the most important thing in the country's war effort today is the state of the farmer's mind. Is he going on a production strike, either out of resentment or frustration? Occasionally one hears it.

"If somebody doesn't do something pretty soon I'll put in a garden patch, feed a couple of hogs for the family and fold up for the duration."

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That, the country should know, is grain-elevator tall-talk. What do the first food communiqués of 1943 say?

The blackest prophecies of all have been made regarding milk production, doubly harassed by the heaviest manpower losses in all agriculture and by narrow price ceilings. Yet milk production in January was the highest on record. The previous high mark had been set in December.

Egg production in January was substantially higher than in January, 1942.

Livestock on farms January 1 set a new high record with vital hogs and cattle leading the increase. Last fall the men who buy cattle in the West and fatten them for market in corn-belt feed lots were plunged in gloom. After hearing a county farm agent explain why they couldn't possibly feed cattle another season, a city dweller asked in real concern, "But what will they do?" In some surprise the county agent replied, "Why, feed cattle, of course." And feeding cattle they are. Even the most reliable agencies predicted a reduction for 1943, but when a count was made January 1, an eight-percent increase over the year before was found in eleven corn-belt states.

No, the farmer is not quitting. He doesn't expect things to be made easy for him. He knows that at the core, manpower and machinery are matters of grand strategy which the Commander-in-Chief must determine. He will sow and reap throughout the year to the limit of his endurance and with whatever tools are put in his hands or created by his ingenuity.

With all this, there will be a shortage of food. Like manpower, the food shortage cannot be "solved." Existing crop goals are based on average weather and call for something like a seven-percent increase over 1942. If this near miracle were to be achieved, there would still be a shortage. The army and Lend-Lease will take more than the seven percent. But conservative economists at the University of Illinois say the average per-capita consumption is not likely to fall significantly below the 1935-39 average.

The 1943 food battle most certainly is not lost even as it is begun. It *could* be lost if the administration acts unwisely in regard to either manpower or machinery. Congressmen trying recklessly to blackjack the Department of Agriculture might lose it. It could be lost by the weather. But it will not be lost by the farmer.

ARTHUR MOORE

Gandhi and the Viceroy

Last week Mohandas K. Gandhi survived the twenty-one-day fast which at one stage threatened to end the career of the frail little Indian revolutionary. Few Americans, even among those most keenly interested in India's struggle for independence, actually knew why the seventy-three-year-old leader had undertaken to "crucify the flesh by fasting." News dispatches from India, including the carefully censored versions of the correspondence between Gandhi and the Viceroy which preceded the fast, gave only the most vague explanations for Gandhi's action. Those which did advance a cause described the fast as a protest against Gandhi's own internment. The American public was uninformed not only regarding Gandhi's reason for fasting but also about recent significant events in India stretching back to the August resolution, with which the Congress Party adopted an anti-British movement designed to rid India of her British Emperor.

Uncensored copies of the wordy correspondence exchanged between Gandhi and the Viceroy preliminary to the fast have finally reached Washington. In these documents, which were never intended for general publication, Gandhi placed on record his own case and that of the Congress Party of which he is the acknowledged, though unofficial, leader.

In this correspondence, to which I have had access, Gandhi's reasons for fasting are seen to be not for personal protest but to make a desperate plea that arrested Congress leaders and followers should not be condemned to prison without trial. Gandhi's own words revealed too that he was contesting, in the only way left to him, not only the detention of the 78,000 Indians which the British reportedly are holding without trial, but also the government's charges that the Congress Party was plotting to bring about a violent disruption of the war effort.

"You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defense," Gandhi told the Viceroy on February 7—two days before starting his fast. "Have you thought of the possibility of their being found guiltless when they are put before an impartial tribunal? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meantime, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become available?"

Previously (on January 19) Gandhi had pleaded that his colleagues and followers be given an opportunity to refute the charges against them and stated:

"You are bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads. But you will not expect me to do so. Such reports have before now often proved fallible."

To this, the Viceroy replied on February 5:

"You have stated that I cannot expect you to accept

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the accuracy of official reports on which I rely. It is not, therefore, clear to me how you expect or even desire me to convince you of anything."

However, the Viceroy restated the government's charges in the same letter, as follows:

> There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy [set forth in the August anti-British resolution] to lead to violence and that you were prepared to condone it, and that the violence that ensued formed a part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders.
>
> I have ample information that a campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions circulated in the name of the All India Congress Committee. If we do not act on all this information, or make it publicly known, it is because time is not yet ripe. You may rest assured that charges against Congress will have to be met sooner or later, and it will then be for you or any of your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world if you can. And if, in the meantime, you yourself by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, judgment will go against you by default.

In rejecting Gandhi's allegation that "proof should be correspondent to canons of English jurisprudence," the Viceroy would only concede:

"My government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and against Congress leaders" (February 5).

To this Gandhi replied two days later:

"You have left me no loophole for escape from an ordeal I have set before myself. I begin it on the 9th instant with the clearest possible conscience. Despite your description of it as 'a form of political blackmail,' it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the highest tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the Judgment Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence."

Together with this correspondence, which was published in India at the beginning of Gandhi's fast but which evidently was not permitted to be sent out of the country in its entirety, three other letters exchanged shortly after Gandhi's arrest have been revealed.

On August 14, Gandhi stated the reasons which prompted his party to adopt its anti-British resolution on August 9:

"The Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people a measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention," he explained. "It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause."

Referring to this action, Gandhi complained to the Viceroy on January 29:

"You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against fascism in every shape or form. It tenders coöperation in the war effort under the circumstances which alone can make effective and nationwide coöperation possible. Is all this open to reproach?"

In the same letter, Gandhi answered the government's charges of treason brought against Congress by the counter-charges:

> The precipitate action of [the] government leads one to think they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which Congress was moving towards direct action might make world opinion veer round to Congress, as it has already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of grounds for the government's rejection of Congress demands. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and Saturday nights after the passing of the resolution by the All India Congress Committee. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand.

Gandhi here referred to his request made on August 8 for an interview with the Viceroy in which he hoped to reach a solution to Indian political problems.

"Civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek an appointment from you," Gandhi reiterated on January 29.

"I am certain that nothing but good will would have resulted if you had stayed your hand and granted me an interview which I had announced on the night of August 8 I was to seek," he emphasized in an earlier letter.

Gandhi made still another charge against the Viceroy's government, the significance of which tends to refute the widespread belief in America that Congress is unwilling to have anything to do with the Moslem League, one of the most powerful political parties in India:

> The government has evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that Congress by its August resolution asked nothing for itself [he wrote as a postscript to his letter of January 29]. As you should be aware, Congress was willing and prepared for the government inviting Jinnah [the Moslem leader] to form a National Government subject to general adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such a government being responsible to a duly elected assembly. Being isolated from the [Congress] Working Committee, I do not know its present view. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

Since the Congress Party's recommendation for a solution of the current political impasse had been thrown into the discard, Gandhi turned to examining the British government's offer "that as soon as hostilities cease, India should devise for herself with full freedom of decision and on a basis expressing all and not only in a single party the form of government

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which she regards as most suited to her conditions."

Without reiterating all the Indian objections to the Cripps's proposals, which had been stated in April, Gandhi confined himself to saying on August 14:

> Has this offer any reality about it? Parties grow up like mushrooms, for without proving their representative character, the government will welcome them as they have done in the past; and if the parties oppose Congress and its activities, though they may do lip homage to independence, frustration is inherent in the government offer.
>
> Hence the logical character of withdrawal first. Only after the end of British power and a fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom will the formation of a truly representative government, whether provisional or permanent, be possible. The living burial of the author of the demand has not resolved the deadlock; it has aggravated it.

Gandhi next challenged the government assertions that upon it lay "the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage a war of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between different sections of her people without fear of favor."

> All I can say [Gandhi commented] is that it is a mockery of the truth after the experience of Malaya, Singapore and Burma. It is sad to find that the government of India is claiming to hold the "balance" between the parties for for which it is itself demonstrably responsible.
>
> It is because Congress is anxious for Great Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motives. Congress seeks to kill imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India.
>
> Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that Congress has no interests of its own apart from that of the whole of India and the world. . . . If notwithstanding the common cause, the government's answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw inference that it was not so much the Allied cause that weighed with the British government as an unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of imperial policy.

The Congress leader also discounted the government's justification of its repressive measures on the grounds that such action was supported by fellow Indians.

"That you have the approval of your Indian 'colleagues' can have no significance except this—that in India, you can always command such services," he retorted.

Gandhi also took exception to the Viceroy's charge that he had been partially responsible for the violent riots which followed the arrest of Congress leaders, since he apparently condoned these acts by his silence.

Declaring that without further knowledge of the incidents he could not make a statement of condemnation, Gandhi replied:

"This, however, I can say from the housetops, that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been" (January 19).

Furthermore, Gandhi expressed the belief that the government, by its repressive measures, "goaded the people to the point of madness." He described the mass arrests without trial as "leonine violence" on the government's part.

"That violence is not any less so because it was organized on the scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic Law of a tooth for a tooth by that of ten thousand for one—not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic Law, *i.e.*, of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ," he continued (January 25).

Reiterating his pleas that Congress followers be given the opportunity to defend their actions, he asserted:

"The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But a slaughter of truth accompanying butchery and enforced by falsity . . . adds strength to the Congress Party."

Gandhi's letters also showed that the imprisoned leader had not abandoned hope of reaching a solution for the deadlock between his followers and the Indian government. He summed up the action he was prepared to take as follows:

"1. If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends;

"2. If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of Congress, you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members."

A summation of Gandhi's case in his own words was written on September 21:

> In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent. The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. I feel that the government, not Congress, are responsible for the destruction that has taken place.
>
> The only right course for the government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, to withdraw all repressive measures and to explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely the government have ample resources to deal with any overt act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness.

The only evident concession from the Viceroy as a result of the lengthy correspondence was the offer to release Gandhi for the duration of his fast, which he refused to accept "under false pretenses."

The only evident outcome of the fast has been a handful of Indian protest resignations from the government, although the former suppression of this correspondence indicates that further muffled developments may now be brewing which only time can reveal.

BETTY GRAHAM

Washington

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Washington Notes

Congress Gets Cautious

A GENERAL REPORT on Washington this week would record that a good number of Republicans who were having a gorgeous time voting against every Roosevelt recommendation have thought better of it, and a good many Democrats, who hate the New Deal more than they hate Republicans, have grown wary. For one thing the discovery has been made that the public doesn't like their course, and for another that we are, right now, in the middle of a presidential election, and that Mr. Roosevelt most probably will be one of the candidates, while Wendell Willkie —though he may not get a nomination—is apparently going to go to town in the attempt.

From now on we are all playing for higher stakes. The Republicans are reminded that their records will be examined by the electorate when the time comes, and that merely because Mr. Roosevelt wanted a bill is no final argument that it was bad. Republican Senators Robert A. Taft and Warren Barbour have uttered this warning, in emphatic words, and high time, too, for the disruptive excesses to which anti-White House partisanship were going threatened the war effort, besides alienating the public. Even the conservative papers have remonstrated.

In the House, Republican Leader Joe Martin has been thwarted in his effort to set up one more standing committee, this one on aviation. Another setback is the Senate committee's amendment of the McKellar bill. Mr. McKellar has been accused by reform groups of seeking once more to disrupt the merit system through his proposal to require senatorial confirmation of federal jobs paying $4,500 or more. Certainly the McKellar bill, if passed, will help to do this, but I do not think that is the real motive of the Senator right now. He is a man of simple and unassuming hatreds, and in this instance is out gunning for a specific opponent—the TVA—which had the audacity to come to him and say, "See, there is a war on; we must build the Douglas dam even though it does flood the lands of some of your friends." Mr. McKellar does not forgive easily, and he has not forgiven that. He has been having a hard time recently, take it all in all. His dignity was injured last year by his "arrest" in the anti-poll-tax filibuster, and now Tennessee has voted down the poll tax and that may liberate thousands of the disenfranchised to vote against him and Boss Crump. His new patronage bill was intended to teach the TVA a lesson by giving him a political hand in weeding out its officials. But it was not to be. By one of the most brutal acts ever committed by a kindly man, smiling Carl A. Hatch, New Mexico Senator and author of the "clean politics" bills, amended the McKellar instrument in committee specifically to exempt the TVA, from top to bottom, from its effect. Just what Mr. McKellar will do is uncertain, but it is safe to say that his interest in the still vicious McKellar bill has greatly diminished.

Another matter has taken a curious turn this week. The drys are grabbing the Johnson anti-absenteeism bill as a Heaven-sent vehicle for their prohibition argument. I dropped into the House's Vinson Committee hearing the other day to watch Representatives beat their breasts over the absenteeism of unpatriotic American labor in time of war. I am a little naïve, but I was surprised to find only thirteen members of the committee of twenty-nine present. However, the balance were doing a very workmanlike job in denouncing labor "absenteeism."

This political issue—absenteeism—is a phony if there ever was one. I do not mean that absenteeism is not a great, and apparently growing, menace to production. Nobody can defend week-end dissipation that holds up tankers and bombers; and however much of it there is, it is too much. But there is nowhere near the amount that Captain Rickenbacker and certain members of the House Naval Affairs Committee would make out. Statistics show that most absenteeism is due to sickness, accidents, fatigue from long hours, bad housing and transportation, increased employment of women and older workers, etc. British workers' morale is superb, but absenteeism in Britain has not yet been solved, nor is it likely to be. It is now an American problem that, almost certainly, is come to stay and that will grow worse, for a time at any rate, as more women workers are added and hours lengthened. Even so, the statement made by Secretary Knox, which somehow failed to get reported in the newspapers, shows that absenteeism in this war is running something less than half what it was in World War I—a gratifying showing.

Absenteeism looks as though it were going to be given a political spin both by the congressional drys and the labor-baiters, who make a formidable team if they can work together. But the pending Johnson bill, requiring vast paper work in quarterly reports of industry to Washington, and subsequent submission to draft boards of names of willful and innocent absentees alike, is such a shot-gun type of stupidity that I predict here and now it will be drastically amended before it gets much older, if it survives at all. I wonder how absentee congressmen would like to be reported to draft boards.

A much more serious matter is the ex-isolationists' drive on the war. Here again the new note of congressional caution may have a salutary effect. Embittered Burt Wheeler, who guessed wrong on Pearl Harbor, is now going on the radio to tell America that an "army division" of slackers could be raised right from the New Deal Washington agencies, and to argue that the proposed drafting of fathers of families in non-essential industries would "jeopardize the existence of the American home." Ex-isolationist Gerald P. Nye, who didn't want Guam fortified, is telling the country that America's economy cannot sustain a military burden of 11,000,000 armed men, so he wants to reorganize military strategy "to cut it from the cloth at hand." Which really means that he wants a soft and not a hard war.

This twin drive on the military plans is, in its way, the biggest issue in Congress right now, and it is anybody's guess how it will come out. A layman finds it difficult to judge how big the army should be. But as between the advice of these men, who have repeatedly proved their ignorance of international affairs and America's place in them, and the Commander-in-Chief and his military advisers, the choice is clear.

Washington T. R. B.

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Europe Underground

In view of the current differences of opinion in the United States as to Switzerland's attitude toward Germany, it is interesting to note that the Volkischer Beobachter, the Nazi-party paper, recently wrote: "Switzerland, though she is undeniably an integral part of the continent of Europe, categorically rejects the New Order." The Nazis complain particularly about the "unneutral" attitude of the Swiss press, for which, they say, Switzerland will one day have to render an accounting, and about Swiss hospitality to refugees. "She is to an ever increasing degree harboring Jewish refugees from other parts of Europe," says the Beobachter angrily. "She has done nothing to prevent the growth of this rabble which, on the contrary, she has flagrantly encouraged. Switzerland now openly admits that she has given asylum to 14,000 guests who are hostile to the Reich."

For home consumption Germany is now stressing her qualitative advantage in armaments and saying little about quantitative superiority, reports the Swedish paper Göteborgs Handelsoch Sjöfartstidning. The correspondent for this paper reasons that German arms production has passed its peak from the fact that 1942 expenditures for arms corresponded to 90 percent, or "perhaps even 100 percent," of total national income. It is impossible that this production can be increased, the paper maintains. It speaks of the "relatively good supply of labor," but notes evidences of great strain in food supplies. All barley has been sequestered and 20 percent more barley added to bread flour. It is expected that this will cause a further decline in fodder supply. "The Germans do not seem to have expected the war to last longer than two years, and all calculations were made on this basis."

From underground channels comes a flood of reports of feverish precautions taken by the Nazis in Norway against an anticipated Allied invasion. German soldiers have been told that they must be prepared to fight to the last man. In the event of invasion, the male population of Norway will be called up for labor service. Quislingists have prepared lists of Norwegians who are to be immediately arrested and shot, if the population supports the Allies.

In Oslo fifty bunkers have been built in anticipation of street fighting. In addition to coastal fortifications, the Nazis have constructed bunkers along roads and communication lines throughout the country. After the Dieppe raid, frantic defense construction was pushed all along the west coast. In Bergen, machine-gun positions have been established in parks and at street corners.

Streets leading to harbors have been barred by heavy anti-tank fortifications. Detached houses are camouflaged bunkers. Land mines are hidden on all beaches. At Narvik bunkers and barbed wire have been set up in the streets. New restrictions on coastal traffic have been issued in northern Norway. The Norwegian press, previously forbidden to discuss the possibility of an Allied invasion, is now encouraged to do so, with the stipulation that it must emphasize the strength of German defenses and the impossibility of an Allied success.

The Göteborgs Poston of Sweden says, significantly: "During the last fortnight a considerable regrouping of German forces has taken place in Norway, probably in connection with the new phase of war in North Africa. Norwegian circles have the definite impression that the number of German troops in Norway has decreased. It is known that some specially trained regiments recently left the south Norwegian harbors for Germany. A large number of bombers have left Norway, probably for the Mediterranean."

The Too Beautiful People

If you tried to imagine the most gruesome result of a collaboration between William Saroyan and MGM, to both of whom life tends to be a chocolate soda made out of words, you couldn't have approached the disaster of "The Human Comedy." Its humanity and its comedy never get past its sermons, its hymns and the overwhelming proportion of Dale Carnegie in Saroyan, but even more in MGM.

The movie's most serious error is in stripping the Saroyan world of its main charm—the humor, the zaniness and the mishap—and in playing it straight for its homely morality: sing your troubles away; every cloud has a silver lining; love thy neighbor and the devil take the hindmost; it's not what you do, it's how you say it. All this is right back in the smooth old MGM groove, with the best Saroyan nowhere in sight. In other words, the movie hasn't produced Saroyan in anything like the proper spirit: in a medium like the movies, with an impact of visual realism that the printed page does not possess, there must have been a touch of fantasy to achieve any of the wonder Saroyan insists is everywhere, occasionally well enough to achieve conviction, as in the stories of his own people. In "The Human Comedy," Saroyan has written about some people whom the movie presents as inexorably *average*. Both he and the producers, using the heaviest realistic approach, have tried to settle on their ordinary shoulders the burden of godhood. These average Americans, lacking utterly the exoticism and the life-is-but-a-song spirit which, in the "Aram" stories, gave real being to goodness and innocence, are people whose wonder and happiness, this film would have you believe, can be had just by saying it's there; and Saroyan has made no attempt to go deeper than that. To believe this movie, American life is wondrous when you sing constantly, pray out loud and explain your prayer, see no evil and hear none (naturally you don't do any yourself), and at intervals make sure you tell someone at length the secret of a beautiful life. There are a few exceptions to this kind of behavior: the one villain, the high-school track coach, who turns up a drunken spectacle in the town saloon, demonstrating the humiliating prospect in store for all liars and fascists; and that good fellow, the rich man, whose worth is indicated in the simple way he greets his fellow man with "Hiyah!"

The idea is to tell you how wonderful the Macauleys of Ithaca, California, are. The trouble is that their goodness is so flashy and exaggerated and their real goodness, as it would come out in behavior instead of sermons, so ignored, that even the promising situations die hideously from marmalade poisoning. An example of this sham occurs in the scene in which a returned soldier stands on a corner and rhapsodizes about the town, while nowhere in the pic-

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ture were you shown the wonder that really is there, and in every town. The straight realism makes it so much hogwash—you can't get an emotion on the screen by simply using the words that describe it.

The production is strictly MGM in its weird pseudo-realism. The girls have that ravishing Hollywood beauty that makes you cringe when you first see it. Ulysses, who acts like three years old and very cute for that age, turns out to be five, and you wonder, is he an idiot? His pal, twice his size and eleven, first appears to be unpopular because he is a bookworm, and then it develops that he can't read, and you must ask the same question, getting no answer. The students in Homer's high-school class have nothing to do with the awkward, chaotic personalities you would find in your own high school. The photography outlines each head with a halo and deadens the outdoor shots with painted backdrops, usually forgetting to put occasional people into the street scenes or the telegraph office (except when a stooge is needed on whom to demonstrate the Boss's beautiful character), making these scenes look like those of a play without the money to hire walk-ons. When the three soldiers and their two girls go into a theatre there isn't an empty seat in the house except five on the aisle.

The actors, Mickey Rooney, Jack Jenkins, Fay Bainter, James Craig, Van Johnson, Frank Morgan, play the characters with every capability, trying in some cases, especially Rooney's, to understand and project people that are beyond understanding. And so they are inevitably unable to capture a warmth that was never in the character. If something had loosened up somewhere, if it were all less trite, if the picture had shown a real understanding of beauty and wonder instead of trying to impose it, these actors could have made it sing.

MANNY FARBER

A Communication

Mr. Soule's Smorgasbord

SIR: I have always admired Mr. Soule's writings. I've found his problems trenchant, his thinking crisp, his sympathies warm. I wish I could say as much for his "Total Taxes for Total War" in The New Republic of February 15. I can't—for reasons I hope to make clear.

"The preparations of the United States to finance the war," Mr. Soule starts off auspiciously, "have lagged far behind its preparations to fight it." Owing to Congress' disposition to find it easier "to spend money than to collect it" and to the Treasury's failure "to offer bold recommendations," "we face a year of total war with a tax program which will, even if the President's suggestions for new revenue are adopted, pay less than half the cost, and without any adequate loan program to finance the rest." "It is now high time," declares Mr. Soule, "to apply the stern logic of total finance for total war." To which I say, with only a minor reservation, Amen!

After this bold start I really looked forward to something. To my disappointment, however, I got nothing—unless one is willing to accept a fuzzy, inchoate mélange as a total tax program for total war, which I'm not. Mr. Soule may be on the right track when he says the procedure in Washington "has been to build on the inconsistent and patchwork structure of pre-war taxation, trying to squeeze a little more money from this source and a little more from that, carrying on drives for the sale of bonds, and trusting to bank loans to fill the gap." I'm liberal enough to admit that there may be a better way of getting to the place we want to go. I'm conservative enough to demand, however, that the new way prove itself better in theory before we chance it in practice. This Mr. Soule does not do.

What is more, I wish I could say Mr. Soule is unambiguously wrong, pointing out the reasons. The issue then would at least be sharply defined. But that, unfortunately, is impossible, since it is difficult at times to determine whether he says what he means or means what he says. He comes out, for example, in favor of the Ruml Plan for putting the income tax on a current basis; he even says the income tax is "the best tax we have used"; yet time and again he says, or implies, that we should abolish the income tax altogether. (The fault with the Treasury's spendings-tax proposal was that it "was to be added to the regular income tax instead of being substituted for it"; the best possible tax program for the emergency would include "instead of the income tax, a steeply graduated spendings tax, combined with rationing of spending, collection at the source, compulsory savings and pay-as-you-go"; "if you are an employee, you would not even have to make out an income-tax return.") It is rather difficult to argue with a fellow who is for and against a thing at one and the same time. These ambiguities, to give Mr. Soule the benefit of the doubt, make one a little leery as to the essential merits of his bold program.

Let us proceed first to the matter of the Ruml Plan. While the income tax, present imperfect or future perfect, really has no logical place in Mr. Soule's war revenue program as I understand it, he does espouse the Ruml variant of pay-as-you-go—perhaps as a concession to reality. For the moment, however, I am not concerned with logic; I am concerned, as I believe other readers of The New Republic are, with the advocacy of an illiberal measure by a liberal.

Mr. Ruml has tried to persuade the American public—and he's evidently succeeded in convincing Mr. Soule—that pay-as-you-go is *only* a collection device. "Literal-minded people," writes Mr. Soule, "argue that it [Ruml Plan] would deprive the Treasury of a year's tax receipts or that some people would 'get back' more than their share. I find it difficult to understand this objection."

Mr. Soule would have less difficulty in understanding the objection to the Ruml Plan if he concentrated on its revenue, as well as its collection aspects. The decisive question here is the government's need for *additional* revenues—something like $16,000,000,000 in the next fiscal year. If we cancel all, or practically all, of a year's taxes in getting to a pay-as-you-go system, the important question is: How will that affect individual taxpayers, and who will pay the additional taxes we need?

It should be clear that the cancellation of something like $10,000,000,000 in 1942 liabilities would reduce the federal revenues in the measure that those liabilities, if paid, would serve to provide the government with the addi-

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tional funds it requires. Ruml's argument has been that doubling-up—the payment of both 1942 and 1943 liabilities this year—would compel the rich to pay in some cases more than 100 percent of their 1943 income for taxes. True. If *they* don't, however, who will? If the additional sums required by the government do not come from the rich out of 1942 income, they must come from the middle class and the poor from higher rates on their current year's income. Forgiveness—granting the government's needs for additional revenues—becomes a one-way affair. While everyone would be forgiven in theory, only the rich would be forgiven in fact.

The cancellation of taxes on 1942 income would in effect wipe out many of the tax increases imposed to finance the war. The married person with no dependents and a net income of $2,000 would be forgiven 77 percent of the *increase* in income taxes for the three-year period 1940-42; at the $100,000 level, the amount forgiven would be 102 percent; and at the $1,000,000 level, 320 percent. Precisely those groups that had made the smallest relative addition to paying for the war would reap the benefit. Persons with incomes of $100,000 or more would actually receive a bonus!

To this The New York Times has observed, with more irony than justice, we ought to oppose the reduction of taxes in the post-war period on the ground that it would cause differential windfalls to different income groups. What The Times chooses to ignore is that we should favor the windfalls caused by tax reductions in the post-war period precisely for the same reasons we oppose cancellation today. We are opposed to cancellation today because it would favor the rich against the poor; we should support the reduction of taxes in the post-war period because it would favor the poor against the rich. The largest *increases* in wartime taxes have been on the poor; and the smallest *decreases* in post-war taxes would be on the rich.

These are the things that must be kept in mind in approaching the problem of cancellation. In spite of its fundamental inequity, expediency probably requires the adoption of some measure of cancellation; or, what comes to almost the same thing, the reversion of 1942 income taxes to 1941 rates and exemptions. Doubling-up is beyond the means of large numbers of taxpayers. Such relief should be kept to an irreducible minimum—in the case of cancellation, $2,000 of net income above exemptions (normal and first-surtax bracket). The penalty for such relief, however, is unquestionably higher rates on current income. Either of these plans would still involve a windfall. But it would be nothing like the harvest Mr. Ruml and his supporters are out to reap.

Which brings us tho the central theoretical issues raised by Mr. Soule's article: the desirability of substituting the spendings tax (expenditure taxation) and expenditure rationing for the income tax. Here again it is difficult to come to grips with Mr. Soule because his argument is couched in a mist of obscurity. Two rather basic questions emerge, however: (1) Is a "bold program" of total taxes for total war furthered by taxing less, borrowing more?; and (2) Is a "bold program" furthered by the ineffective (and unnecessary) use of *both* expenditure taxation and expenditure rationing?

Mr. Soule, I repeat, nowhere speaks of *adding* expenditure taxation and expenditure rationing to the income tax; he speaks of *substituting* them for the income tax. What would be the effects of the latter course? To sacrifice, under prevailing rates, approximately $10,000,000,000 in tax revenues in fiscal 1943 and something like $14,000,000,000 in fiscal 1944, and replace them for the most part with borrowings—for it is clear that the effect of expenditure taxation and expenditure rationing would be to stimulate people, especially the rich, to save more; to permit the rich to spend up to $25,000 a year (in itself a travesty of rationing!) and put *all* their income not devoted to consumption into war bonds; to fix in the law—and it would take heaven and earth to get it out again—the principle that *spendings*, not income, should be taxed, a principle that only reactionaries have hitherto had the temerity to espouse. This is all justifiable ostensibly in the interests of preventing inflation and apportioning more equitably the burdens of wartime sacrifices.

In addition the Soule program would involve grave consequences for the post-war period, most of which Mr. Soule either ignores or brushes off all too lightly. Reliance upon borrowings would aggravate what is going to be a serious "transfer" problem—namely, levying taxes to repay the debt. Mr. Soule may be satisfied that these transfer payments will simply be a case of taking money out of the right pocket as taxes and putting it in the left as interest payments; but the overwhelming majority of economists take the problem a lot more seriously. The nation as a nation may be no richer or poorer (though this is questionable because of the effects of taxation on investment, consumption and, therefore, the national income). But under Mr. Soule's scheme there is a real likelihood that the wrong individuals will get richer and the right individuals poorer. What is more, a huge debt would circumscribe the government's freedom of action and make more difficult control of the monetary and banking system.

There is something simple and fetching about the idea of expenditure rationing which commends it to all decent people interested in apportioning the costs of the war fairly and equitably. As a rule, however, its advocates overlook one of its serious limitations—sometimes a fatal limitation. Rationing approaches the equalitarian ideal in a non-monetary economy. In a monetary economy such as ours it is apt, when employed as a substitute for heavy income taxation, to approach the non-egalitarian ideal. The equity it achieves in apportioning wartime sacrifices is likely to appear slight in view of the inequities it creates in the post-war period. A strong individual income tax is the best assurance we have against the exacerbation of persistent tendencies making for maldistribution of wealth and income.

Mr. Soule's program of expenditure taxation and expenditure rationing leaves much to be desired even as a method of preventing war inflation and apportioning equitably war sacrifices. The ceiling on expenditures for consumption would be $25,000, making a joke out of rationing; and the spendings tax would be raised to a high (?) of 97.5 percent for the last $1,000 of a $25,000 budget. Why not a 500-percent tax on the last $1,000, Mr. Soule? Better still, why not a 500-percent tax on the last $1,000 of a $10,000 budget? Mr. Soule is evidently under the illusion that a spendings tax is the same as an income tax. An income tax can never be imposed at rates over 100

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percent. But is there any reason why we can't cut consumption dead above a certain point by demanding that a person pay $5 in tax for every dollar he would like to spend? We don't need *both* a spendings tax and expenditure rationing, Mr. Soule. Either one, effectively employed, would do the trick.

Let liberals unite on a program of expenditure taxation *or* expenditure rationing; but let this program *supplement* the best income-tax structure we can devise. Each has its own functions to perform. The income tax would take care effectively of *current* income. Expenditure taxation or expenditure rationing would immobilize effectively *past* income, or accumulated savings. Total taxes for total war—to employ Mr. Soule's felicitous handle—demand both.

Washington, D. C. HAROLD MAGER

SIR: The main point to be made in reply to Mr. Mager is a general one. While he is not speaking officially for the Treasury Department, his comment is typical of its negative and ineffectual attitude. It has wasted all its ammunition in attacking proposals put forward by others without having any adequate program of its own. My article was not written to defend the Ruml Plan (comments on which occupied only a small section of it), and I have no proprietary interest in the tentative suggestion for a spendings tax at the end. If the Treasury would come forward with any bold and sufficient fiscal program, I would cheerfully support it.

Now for a few detailed rejoinders.

The Income Tax. – What I wrote about the income tax seems to me perfectly clear and consistent. It is the best form of tax we have yet employed, but it has grave faults. First, it has been collected a year late. Second, its administration is difficult and laborious. Third, it is a terrible nuisance to the taxpayer. Fourth, it is full of loopholes. All these faults become exaggerated, the more we have to collect, and the farther down in the income scale we have to set the exemptions. It might be possible to devise something better.

The Ruml Plan. – The Ruml Plan is simply a suggestion that in calculating the taxes we have to pay this year, we apply the current rates to the figures which represent the income we are receiving in 1943 instead of to the figures representing the income we received in 1942. Once this elementary fact is grasped, it ought to be clear that a change from the existing practice to that suggested by Mr. Ruml would not "forgive" any taxes to anyone, or "cancel" any taxes, or offer anyone any "windfall." Everyone would have to pay taxes just as if the change had not been made, and higher ones too, in most cases, since 1943 incomes will be larger than those received in 1942.

In view of this obvious fact, I still cannot make any sense out of Mr. Mager's indignant discussion—which is essentially the same as that used by Treasury spokesmen since the beginning of the argument—about "forgiveness," "cancellation" and "windfalls." If the reader can do so, he is welcome.

I believe, however, that I can state the Treasury's essential position in more comprehensible and less tendentious language. We need to collect a lot more revenue than we are collecting, or than we could collect under present tax rates, Ruml Plan or no Ruml Plan. It is important to collect as much as possible from those who can best afford to pay, so that those who can pay less need not bear quite so heavy a burden. Congress could not be induced to place a rate of more than 100 percent on any income, however high, since that would be, not an income tax but a capital levy. Nevertheless the same result can be produced in effect if Congress can be persuaded to impose double taxes this year—one calculated on 1943 income, and another at the same rates on 1942 income.

The Treasury would agree, I infer, that most people could not pay such taxes and still have enough left to maintain a minimum of subsistence, since they have little or no capital to fall back on. I would agree that the highest feasible rates should be imposed on everyone. It seems to me, however, that the imposition of a capital levy during the war is a dubious proposition which should be discussed on its own merits. Would it not be paid, so far as possible, merely by borrowing from the banks and so be no better than government borrowing from the same source? If it necessitated the sale of securities, who would buy the securities? To what extent could it be paid out of idle bank balances of the rich taxpayers? If it were so paid, would it not merely be a substitute for the sale of an equivalent amount of government bonds to these identical taxpayers? If so, how would it permit us to lighten the tax burden on lower incomes?

It would appear simpler and less muddled to shift cleanly to collection at the source on the basis of current income, and at the same time to see how much we can increase revenues by raising the rates. We should discover, of course, that after placing the highest possible rates on the big incomes, we should still have to place the highest possible rates on the middle and lower incomes, down to a minimum of subsistence. Even so, we should have to accumulate a big debt. Practically speaking, we cannot under existing circumstances shift any of the burden from smaller to larger taxpayers, since if we do the job, both must be taxed to the limit.

The fuss about the Ruml Plan is a tempest in a teapot, which serves only to distract attention from the main issue.

Expenditure Rationing. – The progressive spending tax, collected by means of expenditure rationing, before the spending is done, was recommended as a substitute for the income tax during the war, because of the following advantages: It would place a premium on saving as against spending; it would be far easier to collect, especially from employees with relatively small incomes; it would have fewer loopholes; it would be largely collected at the source and would be on a current basis; it would involve not merely compulsory loans, but an almost exclusive choice between levying war bonds and paying taxes at relatively high rates.

I am prepared to favor a plan combining it with the income tax if that seems advisable, but I should regret the necessity, because of the complications so introduced and the faults of the income tax.

Mr. Mager objects because he thinks it would involve smaller tax receipts. That would depend on the rates, and on how much people desired to spend. I have not the data

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on which to base calculations necessary for a conclusion, but I am not prepared to accept Mr. Mager's unsupported word for it. As I showed, a married man with no children and an income of $4,000 would, if he spent all he could and saved nothing, pay, at the rates suggested, a tax equivalent to an income tax of 34 percent of his taxable income—which is as high an effective rate as we are likely to get with an income tax.

My hunch is that persons with the middle and higher incomes would pay most of the taxes, since it is harder for them to cut spending to the amount exempted, while those whose incomes are only a little over the exemption would choose to do most of the saving, since many of them recently have been living at or below the level represented by the exemptions.

Mr. Mager objects to the rates suggested. They were improvised for purposes of illustration; actual rates should be based on careful study. He should remember, however, that in this as in other forms of taxation, prohibitive rates reduce the yield. The rates he suggests would exaggerate the very drawback which he points out—a lower tax yield and a larger debt.

As to the size of the debt itself, I recognize the dangers in the transfer problem, but I think for the moment these dangers are of far less import than the danger that the government will facilitate inflation by borrowing too much from the banks. We shall have a big debt in any case; my suggestion would place a far larger proportion of it with the citizens than any other I have seen; certainly the Treasury has proposed no solution of that problem.

Finally, may I suggest that though I am very fond of smorgasbord, the plan might be more properly termed mince pie, since it would enable us to take all its constituent elements in one bite?

New York City GEORGE SOULE

The Bandwagon

It was learned on high authority that leaders of the minority [Republican] party feel that the United States is not receiving enough in return for its contributions of munitions and food to Russia. – *From The Washington Post.*

The very reason we have tranquillity in North Africa today—and I think the membership of the House should know it—is because upon the shoulders of Minister Robert Murphy was poured abuse after abuse because he refrained and refused to mix in political intrigues in North Africa. – *From a speech by Rep. Karl Stefan of Nebraska, as reported in The Congressional Record.*

He [Rickenbacker] made a plea for rugged individualism, saying that he would rather be the guest at dinner of Henry Ford, the Fisher brothers, K. T. Keller and a few other automobile manufacturers than to sit down with "those who are living in the lap of luxury at the expense of the sweat and toil of millions of honest men and women." – *From a report of Rickenbacker's speech in The New York Times.*

Deep in the Heart of Texas

Some quite apt expressions have been heard from the lips of prominent personages in recent days. For one, Lt.-Col. David Hill, a veteran of the conflict in New Guinea, in addressing the Texas State Legislature, said: "I'd pull a gun on a striker as quick as an enemy." That saying ought to be perpetuated for all wartime. – *From The Brady Standard and Heart O'Texas News.*

Or Sherman's Retreat through Georgia

One thing that impressed Hurley about Stalin was his amazing knowledge of American history. The Russian leader can recall all the major battles of the Revolutionary and Civil wars and the generals who fought them. By way of illustration, Hurley revealed that Stalin referred to General Timoshenko as the "George Washington" of Russia, because his retreat and ability to hold the Russian army intact for the supreme test at Stalingrad reminded Stalin of Washington's famous retreat to Yorktown. – *From Drew Pearson's syndicated column, "Washington Merry-Go-Round," in The Minneapolis State Journal.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Ferrero and the State Department

SIR: Malcolm Cowley's article, "Ferrero in Washington," in the issue of February 1, once again reveals how certain Washington circles have attempted to misrepresent Guglielmo Ferrero's latest work and his efforts to introduce order into the anarchical European situation.

I enjoyed the memorable advantage of daily talks with Ferrero at the time when he was writing his works on the French Revolution and Napoleon. He believed from the beginning that Mussolini and Hitler were repeating the Napoleonic adventure in a more horrible and tragic form.

Meditating on the concept of power, he decided that there were two forms of legitimate government: the hereditary-monarchical and the representative-democratic. He also believed, however, that the breakdown of the great monarchical systems of Russia, Germany and Austria after the last war had marked the effective end of the hereditary-monarchical form. In his political vision of Europe, only the representative-democratic form would remain.

This form was not able to establish itself in Europe between the two wars. Italy and Germany did everything possible to destroy it everywhere. Britain did not understand that she should have supported the democratic-representative form of government at all costs, among the large and small nations of Europe; nor did France do any better, even though she was the chief representative of democratic-representative legitimacy on the Continent. When, after her military collapse, France denounced her basic principles, Ferrero wrote his last book to prove, among other things, that Pétain and the old men of Vichy are not the legitimate form of government of the French people. But even before that, during the Spanish civil war, Ferrero stood up in defense of the democratic government whose existence was threatened by the illegitimate regimes of the totalitarian powers.

Speaking of the legitimacy of the House of Savoy, he told me once: "The House of Savoy was legitimate as long as it ruled Piedmont, it became half-legitimate after the unification of Italy, and completely illegitimate from the moment it admitted fascism, *i. e.*, when it betrayed the principle which justified its power: the Constitution." Ferrero saw the freedom of the Italian people expressed in a free Italian republic.

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When, at the beginning of this war, discussions of a possible Hapsburg restoration were started in certain Paris circles, he reacted strongly because he thought that such solutions are antihistorical. Have not the peoples whom the Hapsburgs have ruled given sufficient proof of the illegitimacy of their former rulers? He repudiated Darlanism at the time of the Munich conference. In the betrayal of Czecho-Slovakia he saw the opening of the road toward a new world war, because the principle of legitimacy, international legitimacy this time, was really betrayed.

In Ferrero's last letters one could sense his deep concern about Europe's tomorrow. But he was of the deep conviction that the establishment of democratic-representative legitimacy carried out in full freedom could give to Europe a period of needed peace. He put all his hopes in the forms of American and British government. Convinced that there can be no compromise between the principles of legitimate democratic power and those of the illegitimate totalitarian regimes in Europe, he conceived the future reconstruction of Europe on the basis of a people's peace.

Ferrero's whole life as a thinker and fighter is sufficient proof that he cannot be used for the purpose of justifying certain plans for the future of Europe.

New York City BOGDAN RADICA

[I was greatly pleased to read Mr. Radica's letter. As a member of Ferrero's family circle, he confirms what I had long believed—that the State Department is now applying Ferrero's principle of legitimacy in a quite illegitimate fashion.—M. C.]

The Box-Score on Saroyan

SIR: Since there seems to be a certain amount of confusion on the subject, I should like to make the point here, apropos of my review of Saroyan's "The Human Comedy" [March 1], that I believe the cymbalon to be a very inferior instrument indeed. I said so, and I said also that it plays only heart-throbs; but it appears that one must never be too ironic, or make one's points elliptically. One must yell: "Take him away!" Otherwise one is misunderstood.

Henceafter I shall do my best to furnish a box-score with each review. The box-score on the Saroyan ball game is no runs at all, a few hits in the early innings, and many, many errors. Also, the game was called because of darkness.

I thank you.

ALFRED KAZIN

New York City

Poetry and War

SIR: May I comment on Miss Deutsch's recent article [December 11] on "The Poet and the War"? It centers about Miss Millay's poem on Lidice, which Miss Deutsch considers a very bad poem. I shan't quarrel with her literary judgment. She thinks that the poem is so bad that it was Miss Millay's duty to suppress it. It is on this point that I take issue. I agree that it was Miss Millay's duty, both as poet and citizen, to write the best poem she could. We don't know that she didn't. Literary skill fluctuates unpredictably, and the poem is as it is. Now comes the poet's duty as a citizen. The question is not, this poem or a better one. It is this poem or none. "Lidice" may not be up to Miss Deutsch's standard or, for that matter, Miss Millay's own, but will it be a good thing for the war? It is certainly better poetry than most people are in the habit of reading. It has been read by people who don't ordinarily read poetry at all. Actually and demonstrably, it has roused a good many middle-class Americans to a greater emotional consciousness of the kind of enemy we are facing. There is no real harm done except to Miss Millay's reputation, and reputation is one of the things that a person has a right to sacrifice in a good cause.

I have never been one of Miss Millay's most ardent admirers, but I believe that in this instance she stands with the poets of the great tradition. Miss Deutsch cites by way of contrast a speech from "Paradise Lost" printed long years after Milton's first inception of the poem. A much closer parallel would be the sonnet, "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont." The *late*, the *recent*, massacre. It was the atrocity story of the year. As Cromwell's secretary, Milton drafted the official protest to the Duke of Savoy. The sonnet is a perfect hodgepodge of Puritanism, classicism, distorted history and journalistic detail, with tags out of Tertullian and the Book of Revelation. Its octave runs into its sestet, and its handling of rhymes has offended purists ever since. Presumably it was Milton's duty as a poet to put it in the wastebasket.

"Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour!" Wordsworth wanted Milton alive to say things that needed saying. It is only when we contemplate the conception of poetry that Wordsworth inherited from the Renaissance and the Renaissance from antiquity that we realize how narrowly our age has circumscribed the rights and obligations of the poet. It is only in our day that poetry has become something too exquisite to be prostituted to the base use of liberty, democracy and the salvation of mankind.

If a poet believes that there is no true poetry except the poetry of exquisite sensibility, by all means let him write accordingly. But suppose he feels otherwise. Suppose he feels in his soul the passionate humanity of the older tradition. Like Milton and Wordsworth he desires to say to his people the things that need to be said. Is it then reasonable to forbid him the use of the tools of his trade? Does it behoove anyone, critic or reader or brother poet, to deny him the right of any common citizen to do what he can in a righteous war?

ELIZABETH JACKSON

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.

A Footnote to "8802 Blues"

SIR: In the interest of truth and the whole truth may I add a brief postscript to "8802 Blues," which appeared in your issue of February 22?

John Beecher says in that article that Boeing of Seattle, maker of Flying Fortresses, employed no Negroes out of 41,000 workers but that the President cracked down on the the International Association of Machinists, AFL, "his only crackdown yet on anybody caught at the nasty business of discriminating—and Negroes were admitted."

A large number of Seattle church people of many creeds, club, civic and social workers, and some labor unionists (mostly CIO with a sprinkling of AFL) would certainly like to see some evidence of any crackdown. These people organized into councils and committees are by no means Peglerites. They believe wholeheartedly in collective bargaining. They also believe in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the words and meaning of the Salute to the Flag. They don't believe in un-American activities or unfair employment policies whether practised by labor unions, war production employers, or anyone else.

The Boeing Aircraft Company advertises constantly in all Seattle newspapers and over the radio for workers; people in Seattle are led to believe there is a serious shortage of labor at the plant and a consequent lag in war production. Therefore, over a long period efforts have been made by Seattle groups to gain information concerning the non-employment or underemployment of Negro citizens at Boeing.

The national AFL president, Mr. William Green, has been queried regarding the local autonomy of Seattle unions and

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their right to judge the qualifications of their own members. Meaningless weasel-worded replies have been received. Other top-ranking machinist-union officials in Washington, D. C., have failed to answer letters. A high-ranking AFL official who lives in Seattle has been interviewed regarding employment discriminations against Seattle Negroes. Sometimes he angrily refuses to discuss the matter; sometimes he humbly reminds interviewers that he is a Christian, that he does not believe in discrmination but can do nothing about provisions in the national and international constitutions; sometimes he argues indignantly that the employment of Negroes at Boeing would cause race riots, slow-downs or production stoppages, and that anyway those who ask that Negroes have a chance to work as well as die for democracy are using the war as an excuse to decrease long established discriminations against Negroes.

In the face of much confusion—charges and counter-charges on the part of union officials, Negroes and Seattle citizens interested in winning the war and possibly even the peace—several facts should be placed in the record. One of the Seattle machinists' locals has gone ahead and interpreted its constitution and ritual where the words "white" and "Caucasian" are used in reference to membership qualifications to mean *white characters*, not white skins.

On the other hand the huge and important aeronautical union, which has a closed-shop agreement with Boeing, refuses to admit Negroes to membership but does sell to a limited number of Negroes permits to work at Boeing as long as they pay $3.50 a month to the union for the privilege of working. Negroes who neglect to pay $3.50 a month regularly are promptly fired for non-payment. Union members pay $1.50 a month for job security and other union advantages. Negroes are not required to pay the relatively low initiation fee, but so far as can be learned, they are expected to go on paying the union $3.50 a month for the duration.

Negroes fired under these conditions have asked: What are we supposed to get out of this white man's war? Some whites regretfully say that labor unions are injuring the American labor movement by their shenanigans.

A recent aeronautical-union election in Seattle holds some hope that a wiser employment policy may be adopted for Boeing. In the meantime a crackdown—even a gentle prodding—by the President by way of enforcing Executive Order 8802 would help the war effort enormously in one of the largest production centers in the country.

Seattle, Wash. JUNE PURCELL GUILD

For an Equal-Rights Amendment

SIR: Mr. Chief Justice Hughes once wrote that the Constitution is what the courts make it, and in its long history the Supreme Court has never decided that the word person applies equally to men and women. Decisions of that court interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment have not recognized women as receiving the same benefits from that supposedly all-inclusive amendment as men or corporations. Various state laws permit her property, children and wages to be controlled by her husband; her hours and wages restricted; her right of choice of trade or profession limited, and she is without recourse except to the whims of legislatures.

The process of changing a thousand or more unjust laws and discriminations state by state is both lengthy and impractical, because what one legislature may do the next may undo. It seems incredible that any citizen should oppose equal rights for women, but the opposition comes from ladies of leisure who want to tell the less fortunate what they think is good for them, from labor leaders who see in restrictions for women a larger share of wages and tips for men, and from working women who prefer what seems a temporary advantage under so-called protective legislation to a basic principle of justice for all women.

An equal-rights amendment would not interfere with state property or divorce laws unless such laws discriminated against either men or women. During the war women are being given equal economic and working status with men. Why longer deny them equal legal status? Why should justice be predicated on sex?

We are fighting for world democracy. Russia and China make no legal discriminations between men and women. Why should the United States do less?

Laws to be just should make no distinction as to color, race or creed. How, then, dare believers in democracy refuse justice because of sex?

Washington, D. C. EMMA GUFFY MILLER

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Mr. Richard N. Kelly of Port Chester, New York, takes a lusty swing at Alfred Kazin's review of what he terms the "Saroyantics" of William Saroyan [March 1]. He is also sore at Sterling North, Chicago Daily News critic, who, Kelly says, "prefers this windy charlatan to Dante and the Sermon on the Mount." The critics generally "are slapping their knees and drooling over the latest goo of this high priest of sentimentality," he says. Having shifted to high gear by the third paragraph of his letter, Mr. Kelly continues:

"Three hundred and forty-eight thousand of the beautiful people who can afford to belong to the Book-of-the-Month Club are busy loving mankind when they can afford a moment out of their tough schedule of rolling gauze and hating Roosevelt. Apparently Rickenbacker will follow Lindbergh into limbo, but this incredible spawn of the California climate will go on and on, issuing his periodic licenses to complacency and hoodwinking the spineless jobbers of our culture, who have already accepted him at his false-face value as the first scribbler in the history of world literature who has loved life.

"Saroyan's infantilisms would be acceptable, as Lear's nonsense is acceptable, if they were allowed to exert their own claims upon the reader or playgoer; but his pretentious titles and prefaces and his entire approach to his writing and his public mark him for what he is, a disingenuously wide-eyed quack.

"I read in the papers that his two favorite characters, Postal Telegraph and Western Union, have been granted permission to merge. If this untoward event disturbs the serenity of his world, perhaps he can shift the locale of his next masterpiece (due in three hours) to Europe, where there is a profusion of beautiful Poles and Jews in the ghettos and brothels, or to India, where millions of lovely untouchable beautiful people are awaiting his beautiful telegram granting them a beautiful release."

Kenyon Lee of New York City sends us an open letter addressed to Mr. Henry Kaiser. Mr. Lee wants Mr. Kaiser to investigate the proposal of Simon Lake, inventor of the modern submarine, that 7,500-ton-cargo submarines should be built to combat the Axis submarine warfare. Mr. Lee points out that Mr. Lake "has been tossed around by the boys in Washington since 1892." The navy refused to accept his submarine "way back in 1900 when it was a proven success," after which Mr. Lake sold his submarine to the Russians. Now at the age of seventy-six, Mr. Lake is still getting the run-around on his proposal for cargo submarines, Mr. Lee says, and concludes: "Let you do something about it, Mr. Kaiser."

Leroy Adams Grumbine of Los Angeles writes us that "officials suffering from Peyroutonitis are a menace to democracy and the world's safety."

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Books in Review

Where Now, Voyager?

"NUMBER ONE," the second volume in Dos Passos' new series of American portraits,[1] takes up the story of the doomed Spotswood family at home where "Adventures of a Young Man" left it in a Spanish prison. It seems that Glenn Spotswood, who died a martyr to democratic socialism, had an elder brother, Tyler, who early in life had determined never to be a martyr to anything. Where the father, a disappointed Wilsonian, became a worker for the League of Nations and Glenn died, as he had lived, for communal and democratic ideals in an age of power politics and authoritarian revolutionists, Tyler became a press agent and contact man for an ambitious fascist hill-billy, Senator Homer T. (Chuck) Crawford. Glenn reacted against his father's Fabianism by becoming a Communist; but the point of "Adventures of a Young Man" was that he had to return in the end to something like his father's democratic integrity, or to the simple tradition of conscience —the familiar *kann nicht anders!*—followed by all the Dos Passos artist-heroes. The point of "Number One" is that even Tyler Spotswood, a genial political crook who had been impatient with his father's "preachiness," must find his way back to the people, back to a conscious democratic faith. "*The people is everybody, and one man alone,*" we read in the last of Dos Passos' prose-poems here; "*weak as the weakest, strong as the strongest,/the people are the republic,/the people are you.*"

But the point is made as homily, not as an effect of the imagination, and though "Number One" is striking enough in places, particularly as a colorful description of the rise of Huey Long, it is an unsatisfying book. Dos Passos has been giving us such homilies ever since "U.S.A.," and they evidently answer to some deep personal need. It is not that he has gone back on the trilogy; he has simply been dismantling it, stripping it of its external devices and of its cold hopelessness, going over its foundations as if to recover the individuals who were trapped in it. It appears that the trilogy spoke too quickly for him, or said too much. Its tragedy was too dense, the theme was too tonal a disgust; history emerged in it only as a brazen Aztec god on whose altars everyone was broken and sacrificed. The only triumph of the individual there was to register his protest as he went down into the maw of the machine age (and his sacrifice was his distinction; he was too good). Here the sacrifice is uplifting; it has an aura of responsibility. The individual now has to be saved; he has to complete—hopefully—his relation to society, as Dos Passos has to complete his relation to his own thought. There is a ground for Americans to stand on after all, it seems; the *mal du siècle* of the lost generation is at last played out.

Or has turned back on itself. For essentially these latest books have been about no one but Dos Passos himself; and it is their notebook character that explains why they have been so spasmodic in their brilliance, so nervous and uncertain and lame. They are the records of Dos Passos and his own voyaging, the voyage of one of the most conscientious, ardent and scrupulously moral of all American writers; and the story they tell is of the battle Dos Passos has been waging with himself to recover something of the life he once condemned so absolutely. To recover, above all, that central self who in "U.S.A." was only the arbiter of life's disasters, the sensitive recording instrument who once survived only as an instrument, as an artist; but who must now be brought back as a human soul, as that "number one" in each of us with which society begins and ends. But brought back how? and into what world? Dos Passos is not sure of that, for Jefferson or no Jefferson, the world of "U.S.A.," the only American world that Dos Passos has ever completely imagined, still stands in all its rigid ugliness and horror. What he is sure of is his need for certainty now, his belief in some possible contemporary salvation now; but it has leaped ahead of itself, ahead of its materials. The voice that speaks to us in the book speaks, in the end, only of Dos Passos' search and of his need.

It is here that one can see why "Number One," for all its powerful scenes, its familiar technical expertness, seems like an array of scenes and effects under a sprig of homily. The philosophy of "U.S.A." was taut, as the book itself was taut. Everything in it echoed its mass rumble, and the far-reaching tactile success of the book came out of that massed power, the heaping together of so many lives in symmetrical patterns of disaster. Dos Passos' effects have always depended on a violence of pace, on the quick flickerings of the reel, the sudden climaxes where every fresh word drives the wedge in. No scene can be held too long; no voice may be heard too clearly. Everything must come at us from a distance and bear its short ironic wail; the machine must get going again; nothing can wait. But here Dos Passos is no longer driving his characters to a hecatomb; he is leading one man up to self-knowledge and conversion. Here the story simply cries out for something local and deep, for something more reflective than the naturalist machine can provide. But the habits of the past, the full force of those twenty years in which he never dared to release himself (except in the camera eye, and then always behind it), the psychic habit of writing only through hard exteriors, have become too much for him. He has always had to write through frames and by tricks, for only thus could he save that shy romantic observer, the center of all his work, who hid in an external coarseness to keep alive. But now he has to release that central self, to give him hope where once he identified him only with a grim integrity; and he has lost him, for he has made no provision, imaginatively, for any such release and conversion. He has sacrificed him too often in the past, too mechanically, to make us believe that a fresh sacrifice can be uplifting where all the others were merely defiant.

This does not mean that Dos Passos has lost any of his expertness; it does mean that the expertness has become loose, and that all the colors in his style now run. Just as

[1] Number One, by John Dos Passos. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 304 pages. $2.50.

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he is dismantling the structure of "U.S.A." to tell individual stories again, so there is a kind of decomposition going on in his style: the famous hurtling effects, the tricks of pace, the words so snappily jumbled together, now seem merely scattered and startling. His extraordinary feeling for atmosphere is as keen as it ever was, perhaps even keener; but there is a nervousness about it, a staginess, that makes one think of those stilted or grandiose similes which neo-classic poets used to draw the lush classic landscape of Renaissance painting—"sweetsmelling Jersey cows with big clean udders and large penciled dark eyes with long lashes like Hindoo ladies." Every line is as brisk as it ever was, every word as quick in association; but where once they had an architectural fitness, leading us from character to character, from one stage in history to another, they now come at us in sudden flares, and too rapidly. It is as if Dos Passos just had to get them out, in all their full patter, for fear of losing them; but now they just seem a patter, where once they sounded time.

What this suggests, for me at least, is the tension of uncertainty—and its need of improvisation. Yet if that uncertainty is clear enough in the texture of the story, it becomes merely awkward at the end, when Tyler Spotswood sits alone in the courtroom, after being indicted for the crimes of his political gang, and suddenly has a revelation after reading a last beautiful letter from his brother Glenn in Spain. For we see then, if we have not seen it before, how much Dos Passos has been using the story, and almost fighting it, to bring us to the moment of conversion. We see then that Dos Passos has merely been using it to tell us something abstract, something in and about himself that is not in the story. It is he who has been converted, as it was he who died for a principle, for Glenn Spotswood in Spain. Yet everything else is as it ever was, everything still comes out of the American hell that was "U.S.A."—except Dos Passos' need now to make up for it all at once, to set it right by at least one example.

ALFRED KAZIN

The Soldier as Writer

A GOOD STARTING POINT for any discussion of soldier books is the statement Sgt. Jimmy Cannon made some time ago in his column in PM. "Soldiers," he said, "are only civilians in uniform." Attractive as this sounds, it is just not true. It is like saying that tanks are only tractors in uniform, or bombing planes only planes that carry bombs. The difference between the civilian and the soldier is not quantitative: one of greater training in certain abilities, better physical condition, more discipline; but qualitative: they are different beings. The civilian is a man devoted to being happy, holding a job, getting ahead, reproducing his kind, and so on. The soldier, like the tank, is a machine devoted solely to killing, and there is no other point or purpose to his life, at least not while he is a soldier.

However, Cannon is right to this extent: soldiers may not be civilians in uniform, but he and the other young men who have been writing from army camps are exactly that. The outstanding feature of their life to date is that they have not done any fighting, and the outstanding feature of their work is that it shows it. What they are, and it is a very different thing from being soldiers, is civilians going through the deep and crucial adjustments to army life that will permit them to become soldiers.

To pass through a major psychological adjustment, to come to terms with an entirely new life, some strategy for survival is necessary. One of the best and most satisfactory of available strategies is the "comic," and three recent books by selectees on their lives in the army show this strategy in practice. One is by Sgt. E. J. Kahn Jr.,[1] one by Cpl. Marion Hargrove[2] and one by Cpl. Gene Gach.[3] All three young men seem to have widely different backgrounds. Kahn was a professional writer of relatively sophisticated humor, a member of the New Yorker staff; Hargrove was the feature editor and general factotum of The Charlotte (North Carolina) News; Gach seems to have been a non-writer, although it is hard to tell from the book just what his work was in civilian life.

Despite these sharp differences in background, the books are fundamentally similar. Each is a collection of short consecutive pieces describing induction into the draft army, slow acclimatization through endless confusion, and eventual adjustment. Each is fundamentally comic in viewpoint: Kahn's, written for The New Yorker, has the subtle, restrained humor of self-deprecation, few outright gags but constant use of quiet, wry understatement; Hargrove's, written for The Charlotte News, is cruder, full of odd characters, relies heavily on the humor of army folklore, the numberless jokes about sergeants, quartermasters and KP; Gach's, written "for my brothers, to prepare them for the army," is definitely corny, its humor the humor of practical jokes, barracks banter and army slang. Each of the three writers, on his own level, reacts with all the essential ambivalence of comedy: rejecting the tragedies of army life by kidding them, which kills them off symbolically; accepting the fun and pleasure by kidding himself, which reduces his own scale until the pleasant aspects seem extensive and predominant. Writing funny pieces performed roughly the same therapy for these three young men that what the army calls "griping" or "bitching" performs for their non-literary fellows. It allowed them to tailor army life (on a symbolic level, of course; realistically it is pretty resistant) until it fitted them.

A book has just turned up that is almost a parody of these "comic" books. It is a collection of cartoons by Sgt. Ralph Stein, with matching text in primer style by Sgt. Harry Brown, and it is called "It's a Cinch, Private Finch."[4] The material is the same, the tribulations of a selectee, but the pictures and text are so raucous, the army so mercilessly razzed, that here the soldier's life is less symbolically tailored than just symbolically slaughtered.

A strategy for adjustment less satisfactory than the comic is the "sentimental" or "romantic." This is at its best a mystic identification with the entire army, at its worst simple self-pity. There is much of this direct sentimentality in the three above-mentioned books of funny pieces during the authors' serious moments (perhaps most in Gach, less

[1] The Army Life, by Pvt. E. J. Kahn Jr. New York: Simon and Schuster. 152 pages. $1.75.

[2] See Here, Private Hargrove, by Marion Hargrove. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 211 pages. $2.

[3] In the Army Now, by Gene Gach. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 283 pages. $2.

[4] It's a Cinch, Private Finch, by Sgts. Ralph Stein and Harry Brown. New York: Whittlesey House. Unpaged. $1.50.

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in Hargrove and least in Kahn, in inverse proportion to their sophistication). This strategy cleanses any tragedy or difficulty of unpleasantness by frankly getting it down on paper and weeping over it, or identifies the sufferer with several million other young men in arms, and thus socializes and takes the sting out of trouble by spreading it thin over a multitude. At least two daily newspaper columns with which this reviewer is familiar, Sgt. Jimmy Cannon's in PM and Cpl. Henry Beckett's in The New York Post, provide almost daily examples of the sentimental strategy. Beckett's is good old-fashioned tear-jerking, about everything from his pet kitten to the hard life of the army nurse. Cannon's, many of them recently collected into a book,[1] are a subtler case, running to tough-guy, sports-columnist sentimentality, the tears coursing down his cheeks but the words still coming out of the corner of his mouth.

A third strategy for the soldier's adjustment might be called the "hand-me-down poetic." No volume of American soldier verse of this war has yet been published. The best available body of it seems to be The New Republic's soldier poetry, obtained through a contest. The serious poems in the group, including some on a very high level of competence, reflect almost unanimously a single mood: one of hopelessness, confusion, resentment, inability to be stirred by the slogans of the war, and sense of personal doom. Only the doggerel speaks of "fighting" and "winning," echoes slogans like "don't be a slacker."

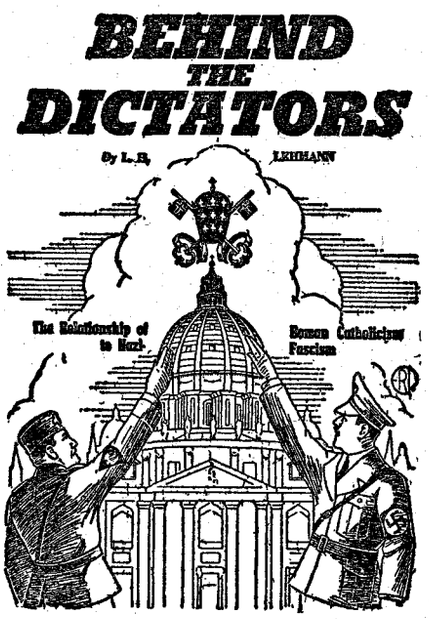
If The New Republic's poetry seems atypical, with the possibility that The New Republic may just have hit a handful of depressed poets, the English experience is instructive. Two books of verse by British soldiers have appeared in America recently, one an anthology of war poems by younger poets,[2] the other a book of poems by a young Welsh soldier named Alun Lewis.[3] Reading the anthology, a large percentage of it written by soldiers, is a frightening experience, not so much for what the poetry says as for what it omits. Out of some hundred-odd war poems, there is not one that speaks out against the enemy, any enemy; there is not one that makes any political statement whatsoever about the war, or even names Germany or Nazism; there is not one that speaks in terms of a just cause, or meaningful killing, or even some possible hope in the future. The imagery is the imagery of chaos and confusion; of pointless, dreamlike acts; of love or beauty or some fragment kept alive through all the turbulence; of lonely life and lonely death. Alun Lewis' war poetry is similar, with the same death-obsession, the same hopelessness and confusion, the same utter inability to find any meaning in being a soldier.

It should be obvious what the pattern is. It is the pattern of the English poetry of the last war, of Owen, Brooke, Gibson, Sassoon, Blunden (who, incidentally, introduces the anthology), Thomas and the rest, simply taken over intact. Almost any of these poems could have been written during the last war, and many of them probably were. Just as a number of the writers of prose have chosen the

[1] The Sergeant Says, by Sgt. Jimmy Cannon. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 254 pages. $2.50.

[2] Poems of This War by Younger Poets, edited by Patricia Ledward and Colin Strang. New York: The Macmillan Company. 99 pages. $1.75.

[3] Raider's Dawn, by Alun Lewis. New York: The Macmillan Company. 93 pages. $1.50.



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formal strategies of comedy or sentimentality to resolve their problems of adjustment, the poets seem to have chosen the formal strategy of Georgian war poetry, its whole bundle of attitudes, concepts and themes, to express and resolve their problems. It is not a dishonest act, since these attitudes are meant to express a symbolic rather than a literal truth, but it is a silly act. The trouble with this sort of adjustment is that it doesn't really adjust anything, since this is a different war; and in literary terms, an attitude that is exciting at first hand, as a literal statement of anti-war feeling, becomes tepid at second-hand, as a symbolic statement of personal maladjustment. The weaknesses of the "hand-me-down poetic" as a strategy, very simply, are that it doesn't serve adequately to adjust the writer; it is not true to the realities of this people's war (as distinguished from the last rather dubious one) and it doesn't produce major poetry.

A fourth strategy for the civilian-soldier as writer might be called "objectivity." The best examples of it to date are the series of reportages on the army by Sgt. Walter Bernstein that have appeared in The New Yorker. The best of these, an early piece called "Action in Georgia," described a simple day spent by new soldiers in the field. There are undercurrents of significance beneath the action and the casual conversation: the thoughtless anti-Semitism and hopeless limitation of perspective of the non-commissioned officers, the loneliness and isolation of the men, the sudden symbolic fury they show in bayonet practice, the distance and unreality of the war. What strategy there is here lies in the expression of truths about the whole army, or large sections of it, rather than about the individual. Bernstein is not socializing his troubles but his technique. He is not using himself to symbolize the army, like Kahn, Hargrove and Gach, but rather the reverse. In the pieces themselves he is no more than an observer, a typical New Yorker reporter, who just happens to be around; in the framework of the strategy he is, as one tiny part of the army, vitally implicated.

Getting out of army camps into the trenches, a book of genuine American soldier-writing has recently been published. As might be expected, it is from the last war, a collection of battle descriptions by American soldiers that appeared in The Infantry Journal.[1] None of the authors represented was a professional writer (except James M. Cain, whose piece is easily the worst in the book) but they were all, in the deepest sense of the word, "professional" soldiers, that is, men whose central function, at least for the time being, was killing. The writing is fine, tough, honest and highly exciting. There may be literary inadequacy, but there are no literary tricks. These pieces are not frameworks for adjustment to army life, strategies for survival, but the attempt of already adjusted soldiers to transform their reality into meaningful patterns. In that sense, it is less therapy and more literature than the work of far superior artists.

To raise this sort of reporting to the level of creative art, only greater talent and understanding are required. A number of American novelists did it with their experiences in the last war, but only years after the reality. Soldier-novelists like Malraux and Regler did it during and soon after the Spanish war. Soldier-reporters like Poliakov and Eugene Petrov have been doing something very close to it during the fighting in Russia. At least one fine and conscious soldier-novel, T'ien Chun's "Village in August," has come out of China's war against Japan, and at least one, Vladimir Pozner's "Edge of the Sword," out of France's fall. American soldiers in this war have written nothing comparable, nor can they until they have seen real action.

Valid soldier literature or art, then, requires a combination of factors. First, the soldier himself must be adjusted to army life, a primary step in which most of the authors of "comic" books are still engaged. Many of them will never get past that problem. Next, the soldier must understand the war and his relation to it in their fullest implications, a requirement in which the poets seem to be most conspicuously lacking. Beyond that understanding, he must have genuine talent or ability, a phenomenon that in itself is rare enough. Finally, he must be a real participant in the collective action of fighting, that is, he must kill people in war, or at least be equipped and prepared to do so. In summary, adjustment plus understanding plus art plus experience might be defined as the qualifications for genuine soldier art, and any incomplete combination of those factors can produce only a more or less unsatisfactory failure.

Just how much great, or even good, soldier literature will come out of this war it is hard to say, since too many factors are variable. It is even hard to say whether that soldier literature will be predominantly the work of the men who went into the army as professional writers or of men now unknown who will only show themselves as writers during and after the war, although the evidence of the past seems to be with the latter. In any case, the books of soldier-writing so far published demonstrate a genuine and honest effort, on various levels, to become the best soldier possible and to write as well as the author can. In the midst of a really tough war, from the soldiers who are taking or will take the brunt of it, it is difficult to ask for more.

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

[1] Americans vs. Germans, edited by the editors of The Infantry Journal. New York: Penguin Books. 189 pages. 25 cents.

Good Neighbor

Chile, by Erna Fergusson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 341 pages. $3.50.

ONE DAY a Chilean woman told Erna Fergusson: "I have a criticism of how you Yanquis write about Chile. Your books give facts of economics and of politics, yes! But the real Chile, the soul of Chile, they never express." Virtually every United States writer traveling in the Latin American republics is destined to hear the same criticism, but very few are likely to take the implied advice so seriously as Miss Fergusson. Her latest book contains history unhampered by dates, social and economic observations with a minimum of statistics, and broad political comments without reference to many specific individuals or groups. Her travelogue of Chile, consequently, is not a book for the expert. The author has avoided taking hold of controversial issues, being content to cite previous writers and spokesmen on the German question, poverty and disease among the lower classes, resentment against the large landowners and the activities of foreign-owned industries in Chile.

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At the same time, Miss Fergusson has succeeded admirably in capturing "the soul of Chile." She is at her best in describing Chilean social and intellectual life. The disappearance of the native Indian and his emergence as the *inquilino*, or tenant farmer; the position of the browbeaten but tough *roto* as the backbone of Chilean development ("Only Chile's lower classes dare to be Chilean"); the characteristic rodeo and cueca; the rising influence of Chilean women in national affairs; the differences between the United States school system, designed "to produce better living," and that of Chile, intended "to develop a cultural and educational elite"; Chilean fear and suspicion of *el imperialismo yanqui* —these represent "the real Chile" which Miss Fergusson unfolds.

The book offers a casual, colloquial introduction to the most recent Latin American non-belligerent associate of the United Nations. Miss Fergusson surveys Chile's geographic and international importance through her airplane trip around South America, and personifies the nation's spiritual vitality by describing a week's informal visit with the leading Chilean poet, Gabriela Mistral. "Chile" is light, popular reading, but before completing the book one obtains a reliable composite picture of our southernmost Good Neighbor.

RANDLE ELLIOTT

The Committee of 200,000

The Farmer Citizen at War, by Howard R. Tolley. New York: The Macmillan Company. 318 pages. $2.50.

DR. TOLLEY is a bureaucrat. He knows the dangers of his calling. "Any bureaucracy carries the threat of fascism and the larger and more elaborate it is, the greater the threat," he writes in an early chapter. Again, depicting the time-serving, face-saving aspects of bureaucracy he is caustic: "Governmental inertia . . . exquisitely organized . . . buck-passing, purposely submitting to red tape, refusing to take responsibility, exchanging memos which will never be read, framing resolutions that will never leave the committee, conferring endlessly over points of jargon, making cabal at the luncheon table—when all these paralyzing evasions hold sway, then there is no mandate for dynamic government action. This is about what happened in the twenties, a decade that seems simply part of a truce between two gigantic battles."

That was in the Farm Board era, when Howard Tolley was a young economist in the Department of Agriculture. Since then he has served as head of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Department's planning arm. His book is a clear and needed account of the enormous mobilization of agriculture which started in the Wallace administrations of the Department, and which continues, geared up to war needs, under Secretary Wickard.

"The Declaration of Inter-dependence," Wallace called the first Triple-A Farm Act, in 1933; and he warned that the workings of the Act must be decentralized, with a high degree of farmer participation—"economic democracy"—or democratic county planning, out on the ground. Dr. Tolley tells how this has been done. Participation: "committees, committees, committees," is his theme: "Many words that had lost their early savor come alive in this crisis. Thus the word *committee* ceased to stand for a process or activity that is in itself interesting and arousing. To appoint another committee has even become a derisory phrase. Yet a committee of safety can become a symbol of refuge if the times are dangerous, and in our own Revolution, the committees of correspondence came to be rallying-points of independence. . . . The committee system, rightly used, is the essence of democracy and the essence of hope for the future."

In his closing chapters Dr. Tolley multiplies instances of achievement by the Department's "Committee of Two Hundred Thousand" farm men and women, working with the county agents and technicians to make over their communities and the nation by grassroot work and grassroot planning, from the ground up. We needed such action in time of peace; we need it all the more now; and we shall need it no less critically after the war. This book is packed

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not only with information; it is packed with a burning belief in the decency and common sense of the American people. Dr. Tolley's style, as Vice President Wallace remarks in a short foreword, is "neither simple nor highly spiced, but solid, detailed and worth the careful study of those who wish to think seriously about the future."

RUSSELL LORD

A Reader's List

THE POLITICS OF THIS WAR, edited by Ray Harvey (Harpers, $2.50). This is an analytical study of United States measures to win the war on the home front—a contemporary history of American conversion from peace to war. It appraises the power of public opinion and the importance of pressure groups in directing the war effort. The stakes of the great political factions—big business, small business, labor and agriculture—are reviewed. Past dissension and blunders are not glossed over. Nor does the volume minimize the organizational and procedural difficulties still to be ironed out among Congress, the administration and emergency government agencies. The twelve different contributors to "The Politics of This War," however, are almost unanimous in showing that the American people now appreciate the depth of sacrifice required from everyone in the present conflict. With facts, figures, names and dates, the book bears eloquent testimony to the strength of fighting democracy.

H. M. CORVETTE, by Nicholas Monsarrat (Lippincott, $1.75). A book which, apart from its own values, is valuable as a clue to an author's development during war. Nicholas Monsarrat, an English novelist, published several books before the war broke out, one of them, "This Is the School Room," in this country. He is now on patrol duty with the Royal Navy, and "H. M. Corvette" is a record of his experiences in the service. But although Mr. Monsarrat is now at sea as a lieutenant, as a writer he is less so than ever before. Having at present little opportunity for creative writing, he has, fortunately, been able to expend his imaginative energy on his style, giving it a rich, rhythmical finish, with the feeling for great spaces and small details that has marked the best sea stories. The experience of patrolling, convoying merchantmen and chasing subs has been related many times during this war—but never with the excellence of "H. M. Corvette."

Contributors

LLOYD ROSS, one of Australia's outstanding labor leaders, is state secretary for New South Wales of the Australian Railways Union. He is a member of the State Executive Committee of the Australian Labor Party, the University Commission, the Post-War Reconstruction Committee and the Army Education Committee. He is the author of "Labor in Australia," a pamphlet that has just been published by the Institute of Pacific Relations.

ARTHUR MOORE was named editor of The Pantagraph, a daily newspaper in Bloomington, Illinois, in 1941. He tells us that he is a Nebraskan by birth, Iowan by education, and that he left his newspaper work in Southern California six years ago to join The Pantagraph "with the feeling of coming home to the corn belt."

BETTY GRAHAM has recently returned from four years as INS correspondent in India and China. She is now covering war production in Washington for INS while finishing a book on China and awaiting assignment to another foreign post. She is a native of Seattle and a University of Washington graduate.

HAROLD MAGER, lawyer and economist, contributes to The New Republic, The Nation and other journals.

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN is a member of the staff of The New Yorker magazine.

RANDLE ELLIOTT is on the staff of the Institute of International Education, where he is chief of the Counsel and Guidance Center for Latin American students in the United States.

RUSSELL LORD is editor of The Land, a quarterly magazine, and consultant for the War Savings Office of the Treasury.

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